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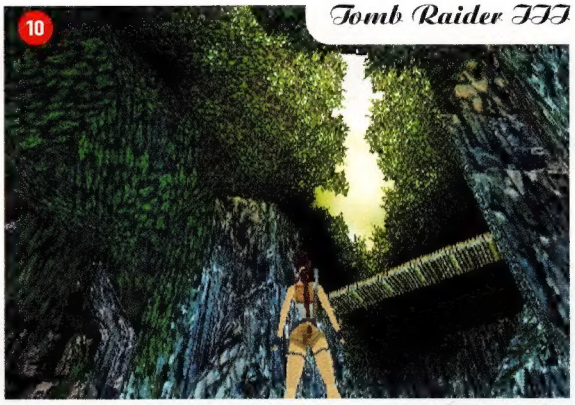

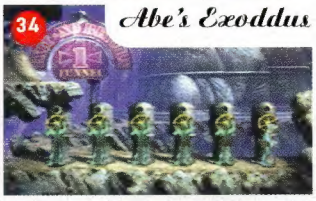

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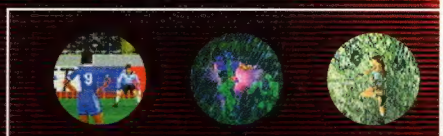
Vive la Re

YOU NOW HAVE IN YOUR POSSESSION

(as long as some scab hasn't nicked it from the front of the magazine) the most important slab of black plastic ever to grace a PlayStation magazine. Not only are you the proud owner of Station Demo Disc 1, you are also a part of history in the making, as you have purchased the launch issue of the UK's first unofficial PlayStation magazine with a free demo disc every month! In fact, it could be so valuable that you should go back and buy a second copy to keep in pristine condition as a collector's item!

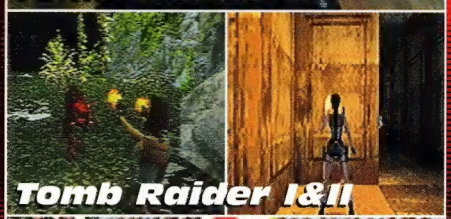
STATION 1



You also now have the world exclusive PlayStation premier of *Tomb Raider III*! That's right, the first public viewing of the eagerly awaited third instalment in the adventures of the lovely Miss Croft.

What more could you want? Well, we thought that perhaps a bit of soccer action wouldn't go a miss, so we've also procured a world-wide exclusive playable demo of the monstrous Konami kickabout, *ISS Pro '98*!

There's also a playable demo of that Samurai sword swinging blockbuster, *Ninja*, from the inimitable Core Design and a chance to go back in time and indulge yourself in a little *Tomb Raider 1&2* action. Great first disc? You bet! Just wait 'till next month.



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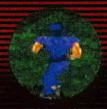
DISC BREAKDOWN



ISS Pro '98 WORLD EXCLUSIVE!

The best football game in the world. Probably. *ISS Pro* is widely regarded as the most playable football game on the PlayStation, and *ISS Pro '98* is the most eagerly awaited sporting sequel this year. What can you expect to do on this snippet of footballing heaven then? Well, take your time to go through the options, set a team up perfectly and dive straight into a time limited match. Nothing is turned off, everything is playable and ready to go – what are you waiting for?

Ninja

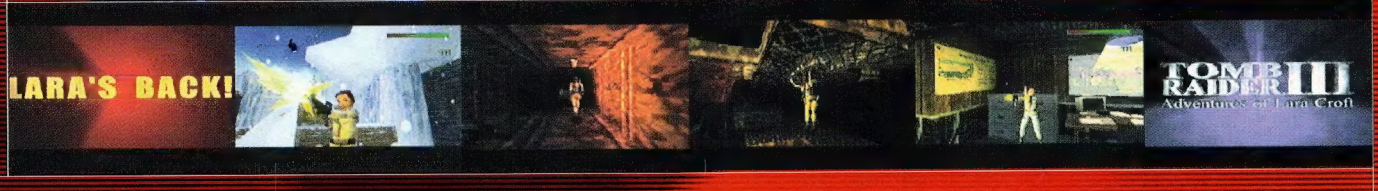
Fancy yourself as a budding ninja assassin? Look no further than Core's *Ninja: Shadow of Darkness*, a beautiful, sprawling, samurai dynasty epic, set in a time of feuding warlords, paper houses and extremely sharp swords. You get to hack and slash your way through the first highly perilous level of this, the PlayStation's answer to the Water Margin.

Tomb Raider III WORLD EXCLUSIVE!

The long awaited and highly anticipated *Tomb Raider III* is near completion and Station has managed to bring you the world exclusive rolling demo for your perusal. You're treated to footage of nearly all the levels, the new moves and some frankly superb cut scene footage. This is the closest you're going to get to Lara in her third adventure until the official release, and we're proud to be the magazine to bring it to you.

Tomb Raider I&II

Why stop at offering the first exclusive look at *Tomb Raider III*, when we can also cram in demos of the original game and *Tomb Raider II*? Even now, both games never fail to satisfy in providing some of the smoothest, deepest and most challenging arcade/adventure action the PlayStation has to offer, so if you're waiting for something to fill that hollow before *TRIII* arrives, these demos should do just the job.



Turn to page 128 to find out how to get the most out of your exclusive cover CD.

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LOOK WHAT WE'VE DONE!

Until now British gamesplayers have been severely limited in their choice of PlayStation magazines. Only one publication has been able to carry a demo disc every month. Only one publication has been able to offer the opportunity to actually playtest new titles and software from the comfort of your own home when you purchase it.

Now, at last, a new magazine has managed to stand up against this market domination and offer consumers a fresh and exciting alternative.

A new magazine has found a way to offer gamers the same value for money package, backed by an independent viewpoint.

That magazine is Station, and you're holding it in your hands!

Now, for the first time, we are able to present the UK gamesplayer with the choice of an unofficial PlayStation magazine that carries an exclusive demo CD every month.

And what a great CD! The world exclusive demo of *Tomb Raider III*! The world exclusive demo of Konami's *ISS Pro '98*!

Plus a bunch of other playable titles for you to enjoy, like *Ninja* and *Tomb Raider I* and *II*. All this and we are still £1.00 cheaper than the Official magazine!

Station is here to stay – with this one 132 page issue we have changed the shape of the PlayStation magazine market forever. This is not evolution, it's revolution! Station is the magazine that most of the UK's leading publishers tried to produce but couldn't. This is the magazine that the UK games industry thought couldn't be done, but we did it! From here on in we will be unstoppable!

Okay, so there's a lot more to a magazine than just a demo CD. Station is put together every month by a hand-picked team of gaming professionals, encouraged to voice their own honest and unbiased opinions on every piece of software that enters the offices. You see, being completely independent, we are answerable to no-one but our readers, and we take that responsibility very seriously indeed. Even our previews receive an 'anticipation rating' to let you know how much we're looking forward to a new game, based on what we've seen so far.

Of course, the only score that really counts is the Station review score, your guide to what really lives up to the hype in the PlayStation games market. After all, when you're asked to pay up to fifty quid for new games in the high street, you want to make sure that the magazine you choose to inform you is one you can trust.

Station has only just begun to take this industry by storm. It is poised to become the most important consumer magazine in the marketplace, and as we put Issue One to bed, I'm already getting excited by all the big exclusives we have signed up for Issue Two. But I'm not going to talk about them now. I'll let you enjoy this first issue, safe in the knowledge that, one month from now, things are going to get even better!

Dave Perry – Station Master

STATION has been lovingly thrown together by this band of videogames reprobates:

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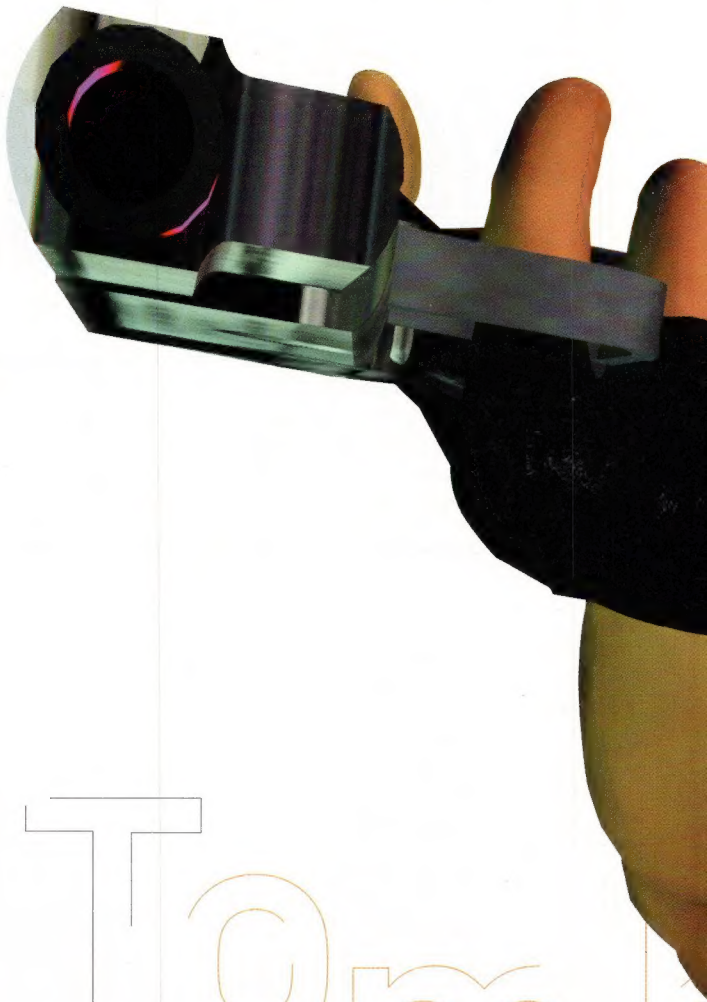
James Gale
STAFF WRITER

Sorcha Fenlon
SUB EDITOR/WRITER

Ant Grace
DESIGNER

BLONDES HAVE MORE FUN?



There's no doubting that two of the sexiest female icons of the nineties both share a common debt – they owe their fame to silicon. Yet while Pamela Anderson seems unable to turn her pouting, blonde bombshell persona into box office gold, the world can't seem to get enough of that quintessentially English brunette, Lara Croft. Armed with an hourglass figure and an itchy trigger finger, Eidos' numero uno bitch is back and ready for action. Who says blondes have more fun?

Tomb Raider III

Publisher: Eidos

Developer: Core Design

Release Date: Late November

Game Type: 3D Adventure

PAL Percentage Complete 50%

SEXIEST FEMALE ICONS

THEY OWE THEIR FAME TO SILICO

WHO SAYS BLONDES HAVE MORE FUN?

TEXT: DAVE PERRY

Videogame vixen supreme, Lara Croft, has become synonymous with the PlayStation's meteoric metamorphosis of a pastime once considered to be the sole domain of dweebs and techno nerds, into a hi-tech hobby with its fingers on the very pulse of nineties youth culture. She has made heroine cool again, violence sexy and has the dubious honour of probably being responsible for more sprained wrists on teenagers the world over than Pam and Tommy's wedding video. You see, Lara has, without a doubt, become the biggest star in the games world right now – a matter helped in no small amount by the fact that she is also the star of one of the hottest games series ever seen – *Tomb Raider*. With two mega successful releases already under her leather belt and gun holster, she is now back to take the market by storm for a third time, with the ingeniously titled Tomb Raider III.

"I think about when I was younger and in school, and of how cool and remote I thought I was then. I felt so sophisticated knowing that Miss Emery, the field hockey coach, had a mad pash for me."

LARA CROFT – LARA'S BOOK: LARA CROFT AND THE TOMB RAIDER PHENOMENON © PRIMA PUBLISHING

What's In A Game?

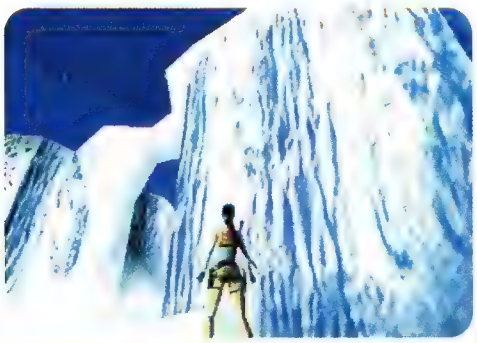
Tomb Raider III is all set to take this highly successful franchise up to the next level and out to a bigger audience than ever before. With a PlayStation user base of some ten million in Europe alone, Lara has never played to such a full house and I suspect that at the tail end of this year, what with the movie soon to begin production as well, the world is about to experience 'Laramania' like never before. At Station we are delighted to be at the vanguard of this wave of adulation, as the magazine chosen to feature the world's first ever demo of Croft Mk III in action.

A combination of the best aspects of *Tomb Raider* and *Tomb Raider II*, Tomb Raider III perfectly blends the atmosphere, massive playing areas and instinctive puzzle-solving elements of the original game, with the full-on action of the sequel, and its popular use of a number of player controlled vehicles. The result is a far more balanced game than we have seen before – something to please everyone. This time the levels are non-linear in their construction, allowing the player to choose any route they want in their attempt to complete the game's stages.

The game itself is split into five very definite adventures, each of which links together to provide a complete storyline. Once they have finished the first adventure, players can choose to undertake any one of the next three in any order they fancy, but they'll have to complete them all eventually before they can take on the fifth and final level. There's no chance of dodging the harder stages, just putting them off maybe.

Tomb With A View

Technically Tomb Raider III represents a very impressive step up from its predecessors. With improved screen resolution running at a super smooth 512 x 240 – as opposed to *Tomb Raider II*'s 384 x 240 – the graphics



LARA CLOSE-UP
Lara close-up

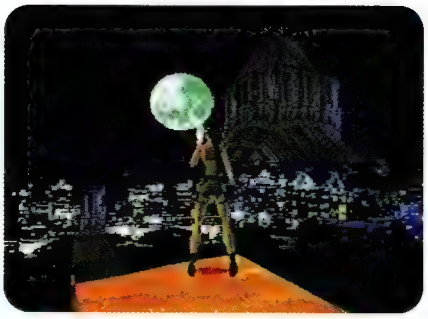
The new higher resolution and improved graphics of Tomb Raider III allow players to get much closer to Miss Croft than ever before, with only minimal pixellation.

are now even more realistic than ever before. Using a new landscaping system as well, Core Design have found that if they use triangles instead of squares to make up the various objects on-screen, they can even further enhance the realism and detail of the worlds in which the game is set. Combine this with sets of improved texture palettes, and Lara now finds herself running and jumping through some technically superb scenarios – including advanced architectural structures like domes, arches and vaulted ceilings, which are most noticeable in the St Paul's Cathedral levels.

Out of doors there are also improvements in the representation of a great many of the natural elements. For example, new transparency effects on the PlayStation mean that stages involving water are far more breathtaking than they have ever been. Rippling effects and reflections mean that there are a number of natural consequences to actions in the

"It's as though I pass through life working ever harder and harder, diving and fighting and shooting and racing, and just when I think I'm doing okay, wham!"

LARA CROFT – LARA'S BOOK: LARA CROFT AND THE TOMB RAIDER PHENOMENON © PRIMA PUBLISHING



game, which the involved player does not even notice at first. Firing an Uzi machine gun over water, for example, results in the shells flying out and splashing satisfyingly at Lara's sodden feet. Throw a grenade into water and you can watch it sink and explode beneath the surface. Small details, but important to the whole gameplaying experience that the programmers at Core Design are very proud of creating.

Going back to the new transparency techniques, Tomb Raider III also benefits from the addition of shards of sunlight cutting through some of the dimmer world environments but – taking care not to miss a trick – the development team have cleverly turned this new effect into an enchanting way to create new puzzles. I won't say any more, I don't want to spoil it all for you, now do I?

Further, more cosmetic, additions to the game graphics include a great number of scene-setting visual effects, like mist and fog. On some levels leaves blow around Miss Croft's feet and birds randomly flutter up above her. If she runs through snow, Lara leaves footprints behind her now. My particular favourite is the rain effect in the game – it falls in perfect 3D. That is to say, that if you are in first-person viewpoint then

"I feel like there's somebody out there controlling my motion. I feel like there's somebody out there who makes my decisions for me...this niggling feeling that somehow this is all just a big game."

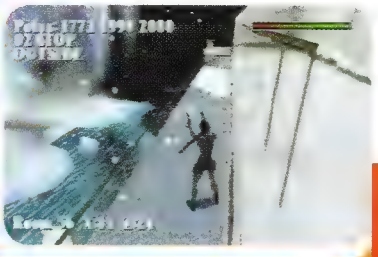
LARA CROFT – LARA'S BOOK: LARA CROFT AND THE TOMB RAIDER PHENOMENON © PRIMA PUBLISHING

CHANGING TOMB

Changing Tomb

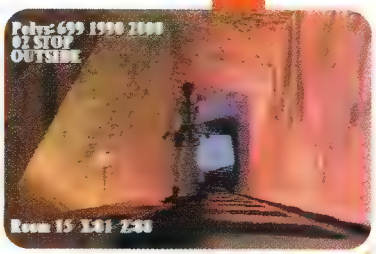
Tomb Raider III is set in a number of different locations, all of which throw up differing challenges for our buxom heroine. At the time of going to press we were presented with the very latest version of the game, hence the coding numbers on these screenshots, but they do give you an idea of how many of the scenarios are shaping up.

ANTARCTIC



CITY

MINES

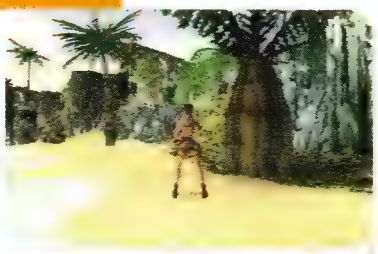


NEVADA

RAPIDS

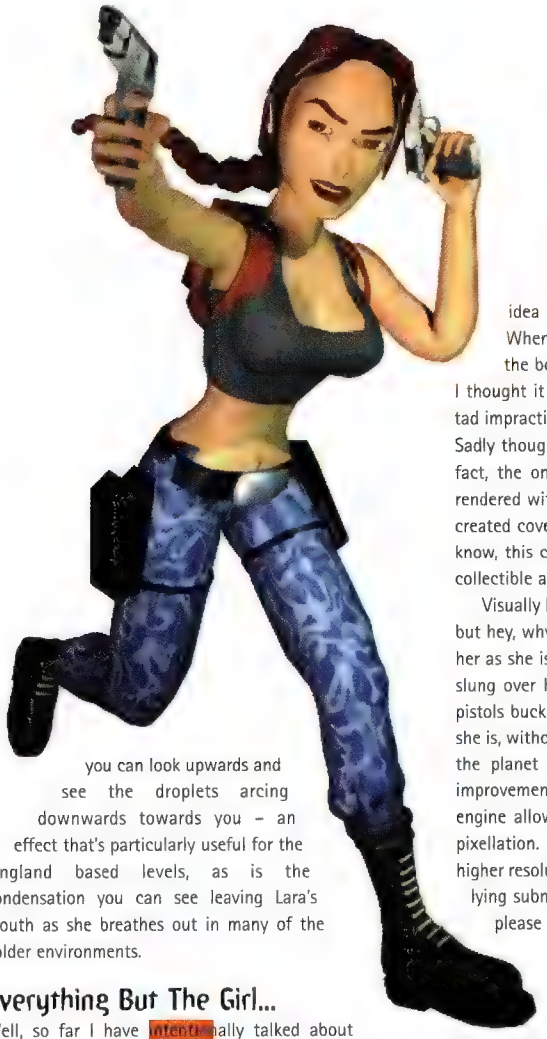
ROOFTOPS

SHORE



ST. PAUL'S

TEMPLE



you can look upwards and see the droplets arcing downwards towards you – an effect that's particularly useful for the England based levels, as is the condensation you can see leaving Lara's mouth as she breathes out in many of the colder environments.

Everything But The Girl...

Well, so far I have intentionally talked about pretty much every aspect of Tomb Raider III other than the main star herself – Miss Lara Croft. On the surface Lara doesn't seem to have changed that much from the previous game, although we are told that her costume may yet be modified slightly from the versions shown in the screenshots on these pages. Apparently she has a very urban guerrilla style costume now, like on our front cover, and a white thermal snowcoat for the Antarctic levels. I can also reveal that in the early stages of Tomb Raider III, Core Design toyed with the idea of Lara sporting a new bellybutton ring. When I personally first saw this new addition to the bouncy brunette's bod, I have to admit that I thought it was an excellent idea, although maybe a tad impractical for someone with a lifestyle like Lara's. Sadly though, this feature has since been removed. In fact, the only place you will probably ever see Lara rendered with a belly button ring is on our exclusively created cover – Core kindly left it in for us. You never know, this cover of Station could now become a Lara collectible as a result...stranger things have happened.

Visually Lara hasn't done much to update her image but hey, why should she when the world already loves her as she is? She does, however, now have a shotgun slung over her right shoulder, in addition to the two pistols buckled around her waist – proof positive that she is, without a doubt, the most dangerous woman on the planet since Lorena Bobbit. A more noticeable improvement though, is how close the new graphic engine allows you to get to Lara, without any major pixellation. This is either a result of the game's new higher resolution, or evidence that young Lara has been lying submersed in Oil of Ulay for the past year. Oh, please let it be the last one!

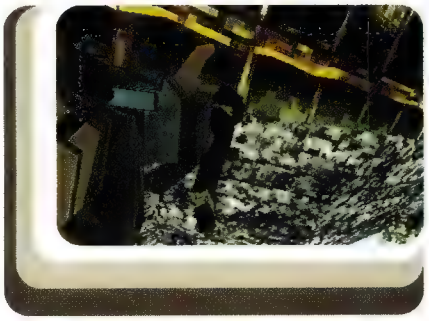
As far as gameplay goes, Core have made sure that Lara appears with a whole new set of moves and tricks to help her get through the adventure. In Tomb Raider III players can now use dash moves that allow speed bursts for a few seconds at a time, allowing Lara to avoid time-based traps and escape ambushing adversaries. Also, when combined with her new diving move, it means that she can now leap through closing doors, with only fractions of a second to spare.

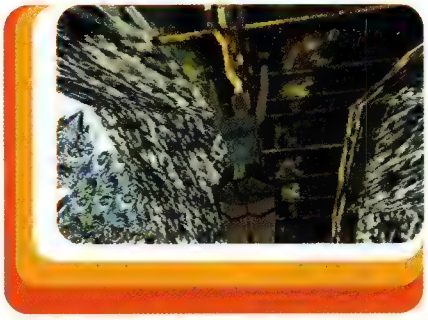
Of course, if a door is shut in her face, then what's a girl to do except kick it in? Yes, this time Lara has been given a variety of pushing and shoving moves, which may or may not be used to clear obstacles in her way.

HANGING AROUND

Hanging around

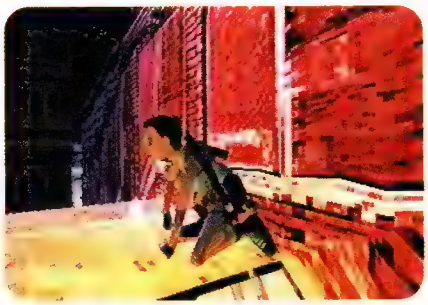
Lara can now 'monkey swing' across ravines – the girl has never been so daring, so brave. Expect a lot of high altitude action in Tomb Raider III.





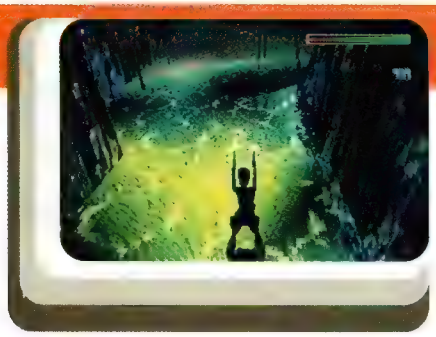
"There are always going to be newer levels to go to, new situations to explore and the only thing that will get us through this is curiosity, patience, skill and the determination and will to go out and kick and fight and dive and shoot and win."

LARA CROFT – LARA'S BOOK: LARA CROFT AND THE TOMB RAIDER PHENOMENON © PRIMA PUBLISHING

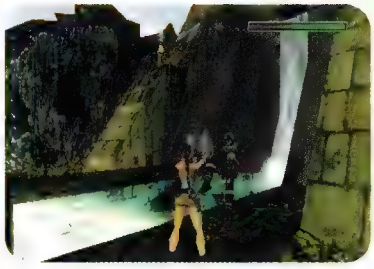


LET THERE BE LIGHT
Let there be light

Multicoloured lighting effects make for some spectacular scenes in the game, especially when they're caused by flashing gunfire or stained glass windows.



Lara has made heroine cool again, violence sexy and has the dubious honour of probably being responsible for more sprained wrists on teenagers the world over than Pam and Tommy's wedding video.

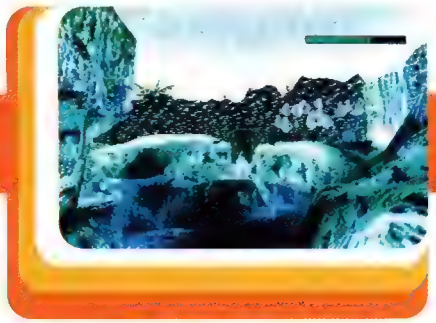


But if these fail, and a door isn't too sturdy, then Miss Croft now has the option of using good old-fashioned brute power to kick the thing down. Flying missiles can be avoided with a duck move that gives players the opportunity to get out of the way of incoming projectiles – providing their reflexes are up to it of course – and Lara can also now get down on her knees and crawl. Not something a woman famous for her 'grrrl' power is likely to do without good reason, but certainly a useful addition to her repertoire when it comes to getting into all those nooks and crannies where the big bonuses and weapons tend to be tucked away.

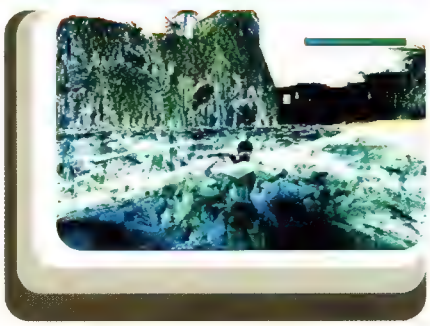
However, the most noticeable and probably the most advantageous new ability she possesses is the monkey swing. A jump and a grab will allow Lara to reach and swing around high areas in levels, which she would never have been able to get to before. It's beautifully animated and when this is combined with her added rope-swinging abilities as well, it seems that the sky really is the limit this time around for the re-vamped Miss Croft.

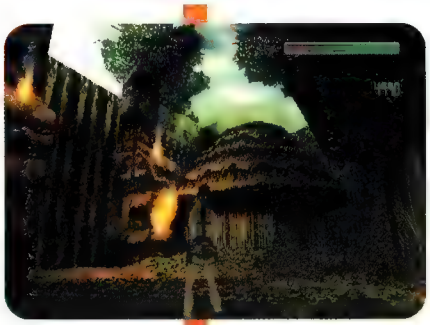
TOMB BATHER
Tomb Bather

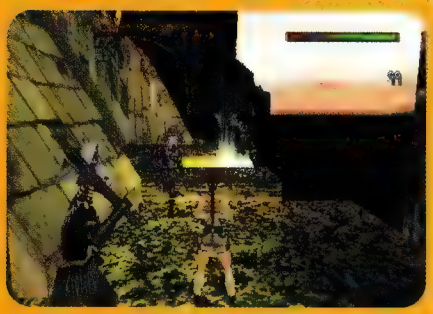
The introduction of currents to the water-based sections of the game adds a new dimension to the gameplay. I still think the air bubbles trailing behind her look like farts, though.

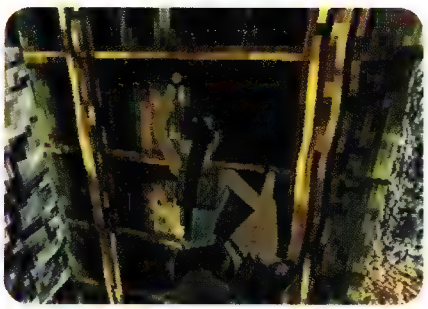


She does now have a shotgun slung over her right shoulder, in addition to the two pistols buckled around her waist – proof positive that she is, without a doubt, the most dangerous woman on the planet since Lorena Bobbit.





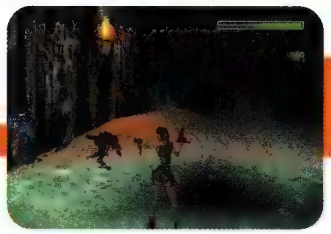


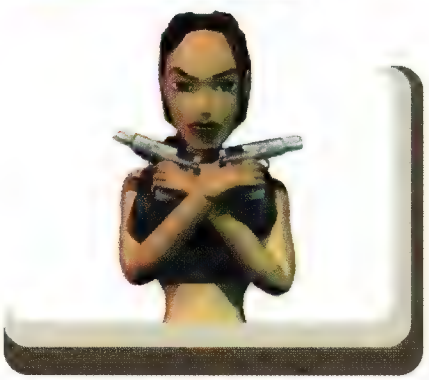


But it's not just her land based moves that have changed. Underwater, Lara has now been given a strafing action to make swimming beneath the surface far more controllable. This is particularly important in Tomb Raider III, as the programmers have also added currents to the watery levels, meaning that our heroine's sub-aqua activities are far more perilously tricky than ever before.

All Tooled Up!

Every level in Tomb Raider III will present the player with at least one vehicle for Lara to utilise. So popular was this feature last time around, that in the third game the producers have decided to really go overboard. Not for Lara the babe clichés of the open top Mercedes or the sporty MX5. Nope, our bionic babe will instead be getting about town on quad bikes, underwater propulsion units and snow vehicles. There will even be whole sections dedicated to these modes of transport, like a white water rafting level, where players will have to negotiate dangerous bends and craggy rocks from the seat of a kayak and – check this out – a mine cart section where Lara will be sat inside a runaway mine cart and players will have to get her safely to the bottom by switching tracks and so on. Now where have we seen that before?





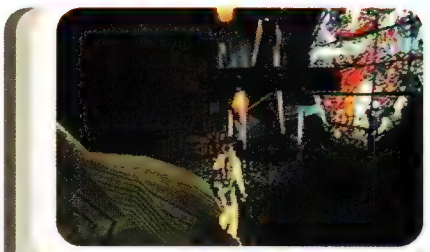
It goes without saying though, that Lara would not be properly dressed without an armoury of new weapons to turn on her adversaries. There has always been something inherently sexy about babes with machine guns but, not one to do things by halves, this time Lara is toting some of her biggest hardware yet. How about babes with grenade launchers? Or babes with rocket launchers? Okay then, how about a buxom brunette going ballistic with a state-of-the-art Desert Eagle? Thought you'd like that one.

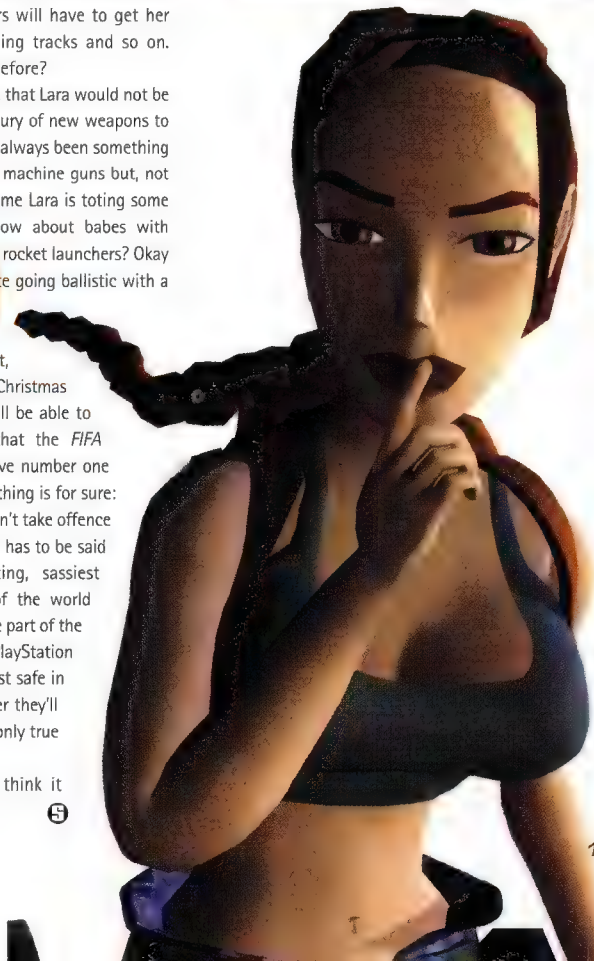
Whatever way you look at it, Tomb Raider III is all set to be the Christmas blockbuster. Whether or not it will be able to finally break the stranglehold that the *FIFA* games seem to have on the festive number one spot remains to be seen, but one thing is for sure: Lara is back. While I hope she doesn't take offence at my calling her a bitch earlier, it has to be said that this is her hardest hitting, sassiest adventure yet. While the rest of the world debates who should be playing the part of the 'real' Lara on the silver screen, PlayStation owners throughout Europe can rest safe in the knowledge that this November they'll be able to get their hands on the only true Lara Croft first.

Oh, for your information, I think it should be Liz Hurley.

DOME BELLE *Dome belle*

St Paul's Cathedral provides a spectacular setting for some of the game's action. I hope that in the finished version you'll be able to do some serious damage to those stained glass windows. Now that would be entertainment.





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See the pull out form inserted in this magazine.

Games are like the latest fashion in women's breast sizes – people are interested in them generally, but **only the really big ones get people going.** But then in the domain of the marketing person, there are bloody idiotic great tits wherever you look – **but then it's the marketing that makes the game sell** at the end of the day... **isn't it?**

Garth Sumpter

Vitriol by: Garth Sumpter

TITS-UP IN A DITCH!

Game publishers today are the first to scoff at the idea that a little gut feeling and an ability to spot a winning game is a skill to be found in any hairy arsed, spotty git. They've been conditioned into thinking that to do this professionally takes a degree, a mobile phone, a cleanly shaven sphincter and the unwavering opinion that you are doing something that couldn't be done by a monkey – or a spotty, hairy bottomed fourteen year old. This is a commonly held opinion amongst people in games marketing – however it's wrong. In this business, most professional marketeers and salespeople are jokes and their jobs could be done better by you, but then you always knew that didn't you?

Anyone who has worked in the games industry for any length of time (except those with mobile phones, shaven backsides and the obligatory high opinions of themselves) will remember some great games that never quite made it but interestingly, few will be able to remember many shite games that sold because of excellent marketing.

We all remember Rise of the Robots don't we? Yes, but not because it was the biggest pile of shite ever conceived – I've seen much worse games – but we remember it because we knew it was shite, the press all said that it was shite and yet you, the usually discerning British public, went out and bought it in droves and then said, "Hey, this game really IS shite!" – ha ha, gotcha! And full marks to the marketing men on that one (in reality, a top marketing babe called Julia Coombes).

However, these days things are much easier. There are only two types of games today – great games that sell over a hundred thousand and the others. In fact, these 'other' games are sometimes really okay, but translate as the 32B to the 36B cup games of the computing world. It's only those in the 'poke your eyes out' bracket of 40D and above that get anywhere today. And what happens to the 'perky but I can get a whole one in my mouth' games? Well, no marketing is going to help them sell any more, because the UK public know what's going on, and these days 'okay' games are found in the same binary bile bin as the shite games. Yes, if you release a game, it will either be a bouncing bundle of firm fun with sales like Tomb Raider, or end its life abruptly, tits-up in a ditch, having sold just about zip and languishing in the cheap bin.

Feeding Of The 5,000

I'll tell you something. An okay game normally sells about 5,000 units – which, curiously, is what a shite game sells too! It doesn't take a lot of working out to realise that if marketing should make a difference anywhere, then it should be here. But no amount of marketing will increase those numbers. What usually happens is that some suit-wearing whiz-kid will just drop the price of the game until they can get rid of it, thus flooding the market with cheap games and reducing the amount of money that customers are willing to pay for ANY game! Some marketing, eh?

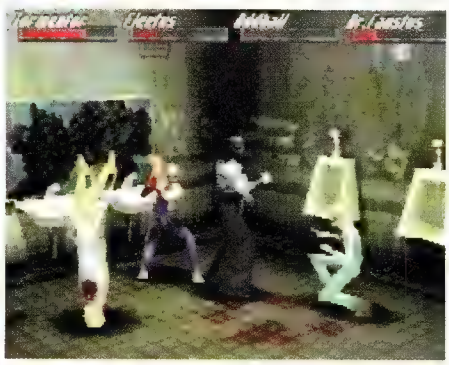
So, the next time you think that maybe you're not clever enough to become a marketeer in the games industry, think again. Why not just get a mobile phone, some sensitive shaving foam and a mirror on a stick? Believe me, shaving your arse-hole will require more skill than any amount of marketing you might do in this industry. **S**

GARTH SUMPTER IS A MAD MAN, A FORMER EDITOR FOR E-MAP IMAGES AND FORMER MANAGER OF THIRD PARTY LICENSING AT SEGA. HE CURRENTLY WORKS AS A CONSULTANT.

Industry Soapbox

Lunatic calm

Set in the eerie confines of a lunatic asylum, Thrill Kill promises the most depraved beat-'em-up action seen this side of a Friday night kebab queue.



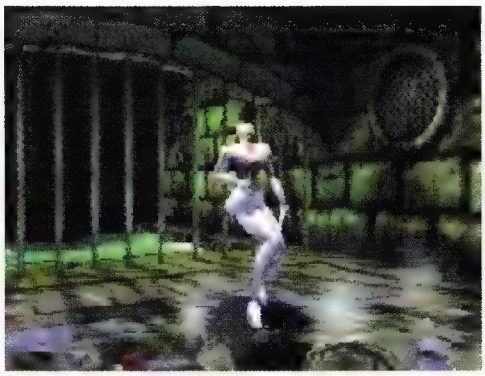
FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: The camera is pretty versatile – it has to be to show off the cool 3D graphics that Thrill Kill offers; the glow of red light means sure dismemberment for some poor soul; halfway through the toilet scrap they all make friends and get down to a little Electric Boogaloo.

Decapitation, garroting and orgasms – just three things that we don't see enough of on the PlayStation these days. Virgin and Paradox Developments are set to change all this though, by taking gaming down to the lowest depths of depravity with their four player beat-'em-up, Thrill Kill.

If Virgin are looking for shock factor, then they've certainly found it with Thrill Kill. From the beginning you're thrown into an all-out gore fest between a rag-tag bunch of assorted psychos, crazies and head-cases. People who have no morals or respect for their fellow asylum inmates and people who for some reason, as

"You'll be far too busy avoiding the onslaught of three other lunatics, who are all out to tear your head from your body."

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: A friendly bit of horseplay turns into a gruesome blood-fest that only touches on the horrors that can be found when playing Thrill Kill.

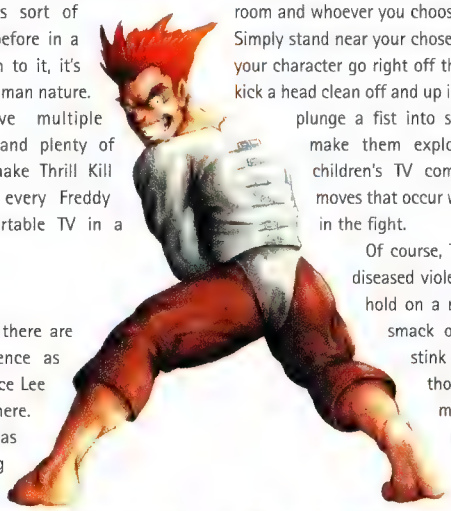


FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: The no-rules ethos of Thrill Kill means that if you want to use a weapon, you can. Well you can't chop someone's bonce off with a karate chop can you?; nursey climaxes after deftly decapitating her foe.

well as being outright brutal, also seem to have supernatural powers. As you can probably imagine, with contestants as vile as this, Thrill Kill offers some pretty sick fighting. You won't know however, just how sick this game really is until you play it.

The main combat section takes place in eight different rooms throughout the asylum and all of them have a suitably dingy look about them. You won't have much time to take in the scenery though – no matter how well drawn it is – once the fighting gets under way. No, you'll be far too busy avoiding the onslaught of three other lunatics who are all out to tear your head from your body or, alternatively, dismember you and eat your limbs. You can of course choose to be on the giving end of this brutality, and join up with two other players to rain blows onto the remaining combatant. This sort of bullying action has never been seen before in a beat-'em-up and when it comes down to it, it's definitely got a finger on the pulse of human nature.

Other wretched moves involve multiple stabbings, electric shock treatment and plenty of lovely quartering, which all go to make Thrill Kill harder to stomach than watching every Freddy Kreuger film consecutively on a portable TV in a moonlit grave yard.



Cuckoo's Nest

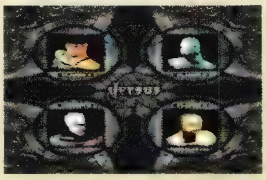
The characters in Thrill Kill (of which there are eleven) all serve to make the violence as sickening as possible. There are no Bruce Lee look-alikes or wrestlers to take on here. Instead, among others, we get to play as a midget on stilts; an electric prong wielding nurse who fakes an orgasm every time she wins; a hillbilly lookalike who eats limbs, as well as using broken ones for weapons; and a straight jacketed nutter who gladly uses his head to inflict pain. The various other psychos all have their own quirks and special moves that can be used to great effect when the time is right for killing.

One feature that we especially liked on Thrill Kill is the new style energy bar, which isn't actually an energy bar at all. Instead of depleting when you get hit, it actually fills up as you launch attacks – a sort of mad-ometer if you like. The more hits you manage to put in, the angrier and more aggressive you become. When it reaches the top though, the game halts and your character becomes bathed in a stream of red light, as their madness is brought to the brink. You now have the run of the room and whoever you choose to pick on is in for a big surprise. Simply stand near your chosen target, hit any button and watch your character go right off the psycho scale. You may see them kick a head clean off and up into the air for a superb close-up, or plunge a fist into someone's chest and consequently make them explode. These moves, however, are children's TV compared to the ultimate finishing moves that occur when there are only two players left in the fight.

Of course, Thrill Kill doesn't rely solely on its diseased violence to make it the game it is. No, hold on a minute...it does. The characters all smack of depravity, the environments all stink of sick and do-do (well they look as though they would), and the fighting is more debauched than a gypsy's stag night. All in all then, this is one sick game and we can't wait to get our hands on the review copy.

Dress To Kill

Even psychos take pride in what they wear to the ball – or in this case, the scrap. Each character has four different costumes to choose from to give them all a new look. Of course, this does nothing to the gameplay but it means that you won't get as bored with the characters as you would in many other beat-'em-ups.



Thrill Kill

Publisher: Virgin

Developer: Paradox

Release Date: 20th October

Game Type: Psycho-'em-up

PAL Percentage Complete **80%**

The Early Verdict

Thrill Kill: For

Thrill Kill is the first four player beat-'em-up to hit the PlayStation and there's no denying that a b't of multi-tap psycho brawling is very satisfying. Add to this the originality of the characters and settings, and Thrill Kill is looking very promising indeed.

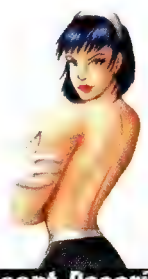
Thrill Kill: Against

At the moment, Thrill Kill doesn't contain all the moves that are destined for the finished game, so it gets a little boring after you've seen all of the sick in-game and finishing moves.

Anticipation Rating 85%

Four players and the nastiest moves to grace the PlayStation. Who wouldn't be looking forward to it?

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: A Saturday night scene from the toilets of many a pub around the country. No wonder there's a market for this type of game; a swift cycle kick to the head sees it detach from the recipient's body.

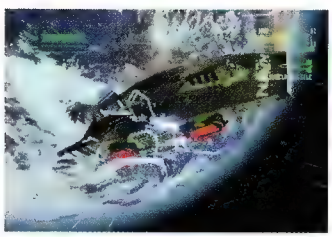


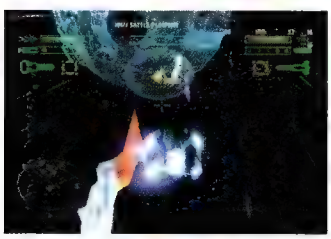
Concept Description

A blood drenched, multi-tapped beat-'em-up featuring the cast of One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest.

Revenge is sweet

Are Psygnosis back on track? We take a look at Colony Wars: Vengeance to find out.





Epic space opera games have always been popular on the PC but PlayStation owners have been a little resistant to them. So much so, in fact, that last year Psygnosis' superb *Colony Wars* performed well below its potential, something that the Liverpool based software house are hoping to rectify this time around with Colony Wars: Vengeance.

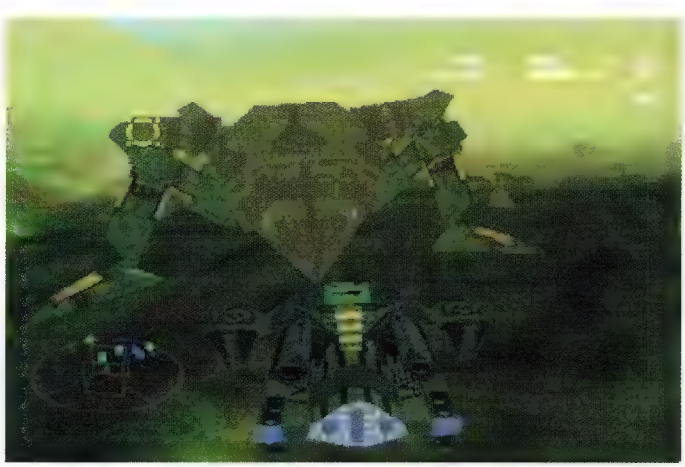
The sequel to *Colony Wars* gives gamers a host of new features over the original game but the most immediate, and we think overwhelming feature of this version, is its pure graphical brilliance. *Colony Wars* raised a few eyebrows in the graphics department last year but Vengeance takes things to new heights of solidity and polish. The massive revolving battleships, freighters and space stations and the numerous sleek fighters, enemy and friendly, are awe-inspiring. However, this is nothing compared to the sense of enormity that Vengeance overwhelms you with. The perspective and scaling on both the ships and the beautiful backgrounds, work in perfect harmony to make you feel like you really are in space, giving Vengeance far more depth and realism.

Mission Briefing

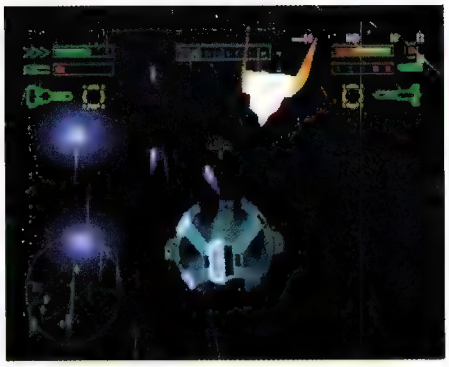
The new story-lines implemented in Colony Wars: Vengeance offer up a brand new mission structure too. Like *Colony Wars*, Vengeance offers multiple paths but unlike *Colony Wars*, failing one mission doesn't mean that you are on an immediate downward spiral. Of course, it often doesn't help but the AI will give you the chance to get back on track. The missions themselves are also far more varied and involving than in the original game, ranging from escorting friendly ships and building gun emplacements, to crystal mining and nuclear reactor disposal.

Another new aspect of Vengeance is the inclusion of planet based missions, where you engage in combat and try to solve your objective in areas that are just above a planetary surface. This adds a whole new dimension to the game, as the player now has to avoid running into hills and buildings, as well as worrying about the enemy. These sections hold some surprises that we don't want to spoil, but so far they're looking superb.

"...unlike *Colony Wars*, failing one mission doesn't mean that you are on an immediate downward spiral."

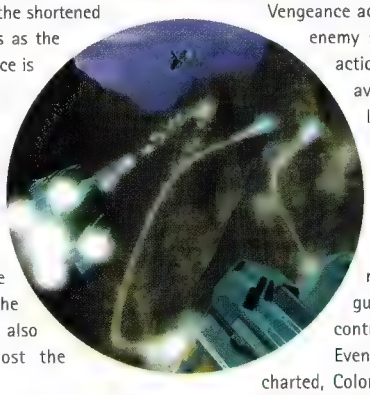


FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: **Some enemies only have one weak point. To put this one out of action you have to shoot it under the belly, destroying its power generators; this huge insectoid robot runs around the landscape at speeds you wouldn't believe.**



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: **The cockpit view is very impressive: no speed or detail is lost, in spite of the extra work the CPU has to do; there is some fogging on the planetary missions but the effect doesn't detract from the gameplay; the space dog-fighting action is some of the best and most exhilarating we've ever seen.**

Each mission is introduced via the briefing screen, which has been radically altered since the previous game. Complaints that mission briefings were too long have been taken into account but if you can't be bothered to listen to the shortened briefing, you can read the mission goals as the level loads up instead. All in all, Vengeance is now a far slicker product.

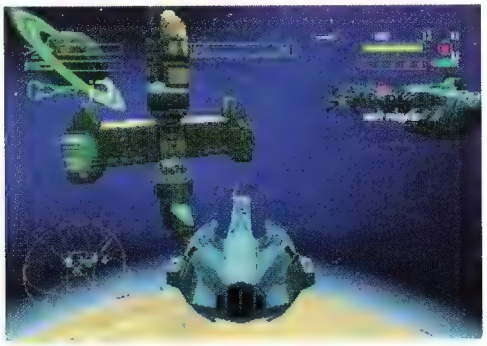


Dog Fighting

The cut scenes on Vengeance are of the highest standard and rather than just being there to give junkie gamers another dose of eye candy, they actually do serve a purpose and are integral to the story-line. On top of the mission-based cut scenes, there are also multiple endings that serve to boost the longevity of the game itself.

The actual combat hasn't really changed that much from the original *Colony Wars* but the engine used was already one of the best the PlayStation had ever seen. That said, dog-fights no longer consist of flying past an enemy, taking five minutes to turn around, then coming back for another shot. Vengeance actually allows you to get on the tail of an enemy ship and engage in some real dog-fight action, as they try every move in the book to avoid biting the bullet – or should that be laser ray? To help you in combat, Vengeance offers over 22 different weapons of varying destructive powers. Only a few weapons are available to start off with but as you get deeper into the game, new, more powerful weapons are revealed. Our favourite so far is the particle gun: after charging it up, you get to actually control the shot as it flies towards a target.

Even though the original game hardly even charted, Colony Wars: Vengeance has the potential to blow up, big time. Does this mark a bit of a return to form for Psygnosis then? Find out for sure in next month's review.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: **The backgrounds help to create a feeling of size, which envelops you when you start playing; the detail of the ships in Vengeance is astounding, even when viewed from a distance.**

The Story So Far...

Vengeance turns the original *Colony Wars* story-line on its head and casts you as Mertens, a member of the oppressed Navy. After years of civil war and turmoil in the Sol system, a new leader, Kron, has emerged. Reorganising the Navy is his first objective and for the first act it is your role to quell the tribal warfare so that you can concentrate on defeating the League, which has oppressed your people for so many hundreds of years. However, this may not be Kron's only goal, and as the story-line unfolds you are fed more twists and turns in the plot. How it turns out we don't know, but we can't wait to find out.

CW: Vengeance

Publisher: **Psygnosis**

Developer: **In House**

Release Date: **November**

Game Type: **Space Opera**

PAL Percentage Complete **90%**

The Early Verdict

CW: Vengeance: For

At first the jaw-dropping visuals are enough to keep most gamers' attention, but as you continue to play, it's the in-depth gameplay, mission structure and story-lines that make Vengeance one of the potential hit games this year.

CW: Vengeance: Against

It's very similar to the first game in style of play. Also, when nothing is going on it can become a little tedious but these criticisms do not mar the game too badly.

Anticipation Rating 70%

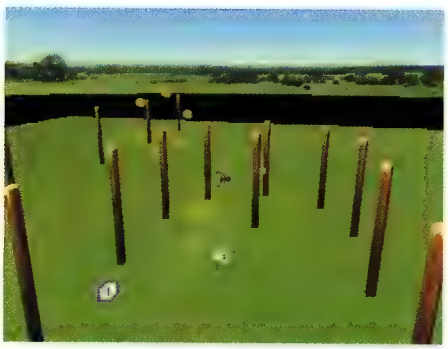
The original was a great game but people really didn't catch on to it. Hopefully though, Vengeance will receive the attention it deserves.

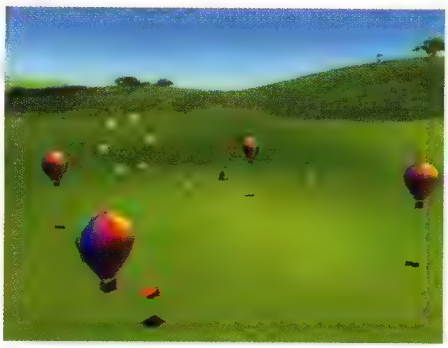
Concept Description

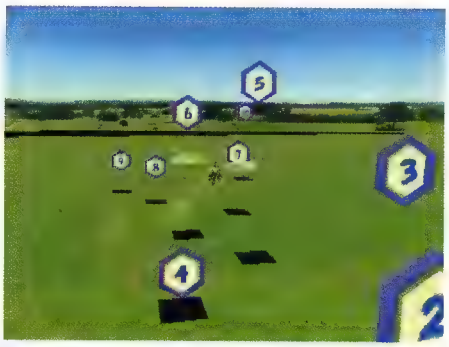
Take *Colony Wars*, tart it up visually, add a plethora of new missions and a massive dose of new gameplay, then turn the story-line on its head.

Blade stunner

Described by Shiny Entertainment as "unlike any other game or genre to date", RC Stunt Copter attempts to introduce PlayStation owners to the thrilling world of radio controlled helicopters. Interesting.







FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: **Collect the tags in number order whilst also flying in between the posts and through the hoop. To get extra points, make sure you stay as central as possible as you go through the hoop; balloon busting with a radio controlled helicopter can be great fun. I guess we are to assume that these are miniature hot air balloons as well, eh? Otherwise your toy would just bounce off them; on this stage the floating cream and blue tags have to be collected in numerical order if you want to score maximum points.**

David Perry plays with his little chopper

on a fairly regular basis we are told but one day, when the wind was too high for him to take his radio-controlled hover toy out to play, the Shiny team decided to brown nose it up to their boss a little and produce a mini helicopter simulator. This, apparently, is how the RC Stunt Copter project began – an interesting story for a very original game. RC Stunt Copter provides gamers with the challenge of mastering a miniature helicopter – complete with a full six degrees of freedom of movement – whilst either attempting to complete a number of different challenges or simply buzzing around the landscape for the sheer hell of it!

Originality And Reality

The team behind RC Stunt Copter are convinced that there is no other game like this on the PlayStation, and I have to admit the only title that I can think of that bears even the slightest resemblance in gameplay and objectives would be *Pilot Wings 64* on Nintendo's rival console. Stunning graphically, yet very simple in its presentation, RC Stunt Copter does in fact possess many of the trademarks of your typical, high-playability Nintendo release.

The game itself is perfect for use with Sony's Dual Analogue controller as the joypad operates in a very similar manner to the real radio transmitters used by radio-control hobbyists. This

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

THE BOYS AT SHINY WAX LYRICAL OVER THE BIRTH OF THE RC STUNT COPTER PROJECT:

"One day, after coming back from his helicopter lesson, Dave wanted to go out and fly one of his model helicopters. Winds rushing in from the ocean made that option all but impossible.

Dave then suggested a R/C helicopter simulator to Robert, and that day Rob began the project "R/C Stunt Copter". Rob went out and got himself a model helicopter to get the feel down and read tons of physics books on fluid dynamics and flight modelling. Making a helicopter sim was one thing. Making an R/C helicopter sim was quite another!

After two months of intensive study, Rob showed us the work he had done. Wow. Immediately, we put Joby to work on the project. Other R/C helicopter simulators were pretty bland and lifeless. We decided that the R/C world needed something not only accurate and challenging, but pleasing to the eye and ear as well. Not only that, we wanted to let the user customise the game with whatever environment they wanted to fly through – and so our level editor was created. Joby was moved to another project and Charlie was brought in to create the rest of the artwork. Heck, with a team of two people, Rob and Charlie, R/C Stunt Copter is probably the smallest professional development team in existence in 1998!

As much as we had fun just flying the helicopter, we didn't know what kind of game to make with this cool idea. Then it hit us; it doesn't have to be a game at all! We'll take some elements from games (scores and objectives) and place them in the flight areas. A player could simply enjoy the fact that they were flying a realistic R/C helicopter, or they could play it like a game and try for points and difficult maneuvers.

This was the birth of Shiny's R/C Stunt Copter, our first software toy. Combining elements of a game with the childlike freedom to 'just play around', it is like nothing else on the market today."

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: A very big part of the fun gleaned from RC Stunt Copter comes from just flying about. The information bars on this screen show fuel level and the amount of gems collected; flying into this cage made of white MFI fence posts will reward you with any one of a number of special pick-ups; there is plenty going on this level, so pin-point accuracy is essential. Burst the balloons, collect the gems and fly through the hoop, according to the orders given at the start.

element of realism is something that its programmers are particularly proud of, describing it as being both a software toy and training tool. In fact, Shiny reckon that RC Stunt Copter is actually so accurate in its reproduction of the control methods and physics involved in flying a radio controlled helicopter, that it can be used to teach a budding hobbyist how to perfect their techniques in real life.

If flying a toy chopper doesn't really seem like the kind of concept that would appeal to you, then fear not, because Shiny have made sure that there are a variety of different gameplay modes to appeal to all kinds of PlayStation owners. For example, if you choose Task Games you'll be set a number of pre-defined challenges to achieve with your pint-sized wheelie bird, whilst Stunt Wins will require you to squeeze as many stunts as possible into a pre-set time period or performance. There are also the obligatory time trials, where victory will be determined by your speed around a course. In Two Player mode you can take turns with a competitor to fly your model 'copters, being judged by the computer on every single nuance of your ability to control the craft, whilst flying through over or around a number of obstacles.

The scoring method uses a system of complex mathematics to pick up on every aspect of your performance. Whereas in a regular flying game you might simply gain a number of points for flying through the centre of a ring, in RC Stunt Copter points are allocated for how close to centre you actually were. Extreme accuracy is encouraged and rewarded. Hey, you can even earn extra points by flying backwards!

Blades And Axes

Sound wise you would expect a game like this to accompanied by little more than a 'thukka-thukka' sound effect for the rotor blades and maybe a corny guitar riff or two. Thankfully, all the time you are flying in RC Stunt Copter your performance will be commented on by an 'intelligent' CPU commentator. This is where the programming team have decided to inject a little humour into the proceedings, with the off-the-cuff remarks being a combination of sarcasm, flattery and wise cracks, depending on your ability. Also, the soundtrack is being put together by one of the most famous musicians in the games industry, Tommy Tallarico – who is also the presenter of the US TV Show, The Electric Playground – so hopefully we'll be spared the usual 'heavy metal' background music that goes hand in hand with helicopter sims.

An unusual game that is certainly beginning to create a bit of a buzz for itself, RC Stunt Copter should be circling a store near you this October. Check out our full review next issue.

"Stunning graphically, yet very simple in its presentation. **RC Stunt Copter does in fact possess many of the trademarks of** your typical high-playability Nintendo release"

ABOVE: More inexperienced flyers can put 'training wheels' on their 'copter. These bizarre appendages help you to balance and detect distance from the ground, both of which can prove very helpful for novice pilots.

RC Stunt Copter

Publisher: Interplay

Developer: Shiny Entertainment

Release Date: October

Game Type: RC Flight Sim

PAL Percentage Complete **65%**

The Early Verdict

RC Stunt Copter: For

A quirky and original game that not only looks great but promises so much in the gameplay stakes. Could be a real breath of fresh air.

RC Stunt Copter: Against

May be too quirky for the majority of gamesplayers. Feeling of control will be everything. Time will tell...

Anticipation Rating 70%

Could be massive, but so much depends on its playability.

Concept Description

Pilot Wings meets 'Honey I Shrunk the Kids'.

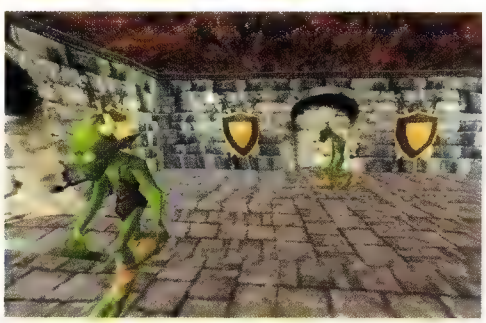
A whiff of sulphur

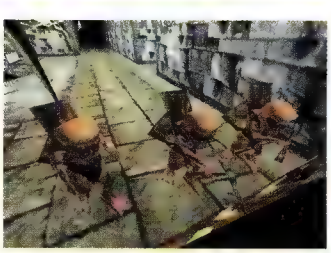
Although Dungeon Keeper II is still in the very early stages of development, its unusual take on a clichéd world is already causing a stir...

Busty wenches and thick-skulled warriors are the usual stars of dungeon adventures: men with more muscles than brains and women sporting less clothing than is strictly practical, who consider a day incomplete unless they've hacked their way through legions of evil subterranean scum. But what of said scum? Do these rampant warriors ever stop to think about poor Mrs Goblin as they chop her green skinned husband to bits? Do they consider the hours spent labouring by hard-working imps as they invade their dungeon home, foiling traps and smashing walls? Do they hell as like! Unluckily for these 'heroes', somebody decided it was time they got a taste of their own medicine.

That somebody was Bullfrog, who turned RPG tradition on its head with the first *Dungeon Keeper* title, which was a big hit on the PC. Now its sequel is being developed – complete with an all-new 3D graphics engine – for PlayStation and PC simultaneously. The shots you see here are actually taken from the PC version, as

"Even foul creatures need a little order in their lives, so your dungeon needs to be created with their needs in mind."

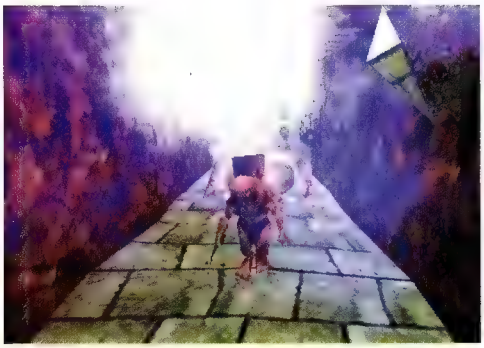


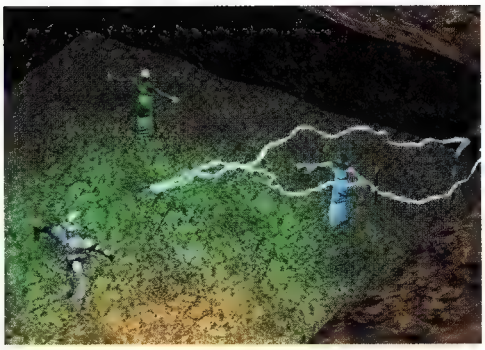


Voice Of The Dungeon Master

We asked David Amor, the Producer of the PlayStation version of Dungeon Keeper II, just why Station's readers should be getting excited about Bullfrog's new title:

"Because creating a dungeon, inhabiting it with creatures and mercilessly slaughtering any heroes that cross your path is an awesome and deeply satisfying experience. I think people enjoy the 'It's good to be bad' angle of Dungeon Keeper. There's a certain twisted pleasure in slapping an imp and seeing him fly across the room!"





FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: **Keeping workers like this one happy is essential – pickaxes hurt more than union dues, after all: put your hands in the air like you just don't care – though you will do if this lightning spell smacks you in the armpit.**

the PlayStation graphics are currently being painstakingly put together. However, although key elements such as the control system and graphics are being developed separately, the two versions will eventually share 80% of the same code, and exactly the same twisted plot. Speaking of which...

The Devil's Playthings

Dungeon Keeper II gives you the chance to support all those forgotten villains by placing you in the role of an evil, well, Dungeon Keeper. Your goal in life is to rule the most noisome dungeon in the land, in order to attract a choice variety of nasty monsters with which to expand your dominion. Even foul creatures need a little order in their lives, so your dungeon needs to be created with their needs in mind. The various rooms you can build each serve a unique purpose: training rooms let you turn your creatures into better fighters, whilst a library enables you to learn spells. Housekeeping is also on the agenda, with repairs to carry out and traps to set, all of which require a loyal workforce. To keep them happy, the day to day business of sleeping and eating is catered for by creating lairs to live in and hatcheries to breed chickens, for those peaceful times when tastier meat is unavailable...

No More Heroes

All this building is just the beginning, you see. When your dungeon and army of nasties is up to scratch, it's time to hunt down any heroes who wander inside in search of loot. These dungeon burglars will soon be enjoying an underground grave, if your troops are tough enough. Pesky humans aren't your only worry though: rival Dungeon Keepers have also been hard at work and sooner or later they're going to cast their beady eyes in your direction, with a view to smashing all your hard work into tiny little bits.

Time for a spot of monster fisticuffs, which is where DK II's enhanced battle engine will come in. Rather than the standard 'my orcs are harder than yours' scrap, where the winner is determined by numbers and brute force alone, Dungeon Keeper II takes a more intelligent approach. The creatures on offer range from your standard imps and trolls through to bile demons and fairies. Each of these has different strengths and weaknesses, which means that players must choose their characters carefully, rather than chucking whatever's nearest into battle. Bullfrog have also built an element of fear into the creatures' AI, whereby they will actually run away to gather reinforcements if they find themselves outnumbered.

Another factor involved in battles is magic, with such spells as the Inferno – which causes a massive lava explosion – satisfying the traditional pleasure of devastating your enemy in assorted arcane but unpleasant ways. Things aren't quite that simple though: as with everything in life, magical power comes at a cost, a cost which is measured in mana. Without it your traps won't spring on hapless limbs and spell-casting is out of the question. In order to gain mana you have to own land, so the larger your dungeon, the more mana it will generate. Of course, large dungeons are harder to defend: whilst your tough guys are busy in one area, stoving enemy heads in, a sneaky attack could easily be mounted elsewhere, taking advantage of that crumbling wall you never quite got round to fixing. At this point you're likely to realise that whilst being bad may look cool, it's also damn hard work.

King Of Chaos

The god sim genre is sadly under-represented on the PlayStation, with a few exceptions such as Bullfrog's own *Theme* series, which successfully combined strategy and humour in a way that Bullfrog hope DK II will also achieve. With its mix of battles and building, coupled with a 3D game engine and a sick sense of fun, Dungeon Keeper II could have the right mix for broad appeal – expect to see an update from the dungeons soon.

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: **Tricks and traps are the bread and butter of a successful dungeon – all the better to impale you with; I'll give you ten-to-one to win on the fella with the horns and the blood-soaked scythe.**

Dungeon Keeper II

Publisher: EA

Developer: Bullfrog

Release Date: Early '99

Game Type: Dungeon Sim

PAL Percentage Complete 50%

The Early Verdict

Dungeon Keeper II: For

The development of a PlayStation specific control system bodes well – this is no half-hearted port. Fans of both strategy and fighting should be catered for here.

Dungeon Keeper II: Against

With no PSX shots or code yet available, it's too early to pick faults. Fingers crossed that the PlayStation graphics will be able to stand up to the quality of the PC shots seen here and that the great plot will translate into equally good gameplay.

Anticipation Rating 80%

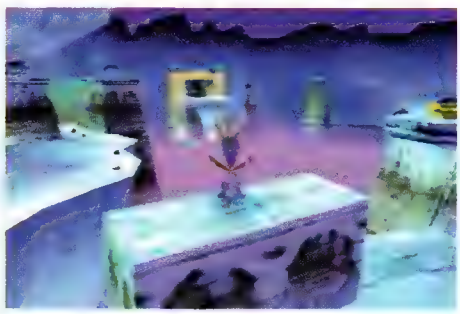
Dungeon Keeper II offers an unusual spin on RPGs and god sims, combining action, cunning and humour to guarantee a wide appeal.

Concept Description

An everyday story of neighbourly love underground, featuring an evil horned maniac and his minions.

Heated halitosis ahoy!

Sony look to Puff The Magic Dragon as inspiration for their latest foray into the world of PlayStation platforming



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Spyro's family have been cast in crystal and it's up to our cute little friend to rescue them, simply by walking into the crystal statues; the stunning caverns found in the Ice Caves offer a feeling of scale that is rarely matched on the PlayStation; you can look miles into the distance in Spyro and still observe the scenery, which isn't obscured by fogging in the usual PlayStation style.

If Sony feel the need for yet another cutesy platform character to battle it out with *Gex* and *Croc*, who are we to argue? Especially not when the game's looking this good – just take a look at the screenshots adorning this page for proof of the graphical prowess that the relatively unheard of Insomniac Games have at their finger-tips, and how they've transformed this prowess into one of the best looking games the PlayStation has seen in a long time.

We know that we'll never see a platformer as polished and solid looking as *Mario 64* on the PlayStation, but what we're looking at here is about as close to the fat Italian plumber's adventures in Nintendo-land as we're ever likely to see, and with the help of *Crash* producer, Mark Cerney, we may have a contender to take *Mario* on in the platform character world title fight. Okay, so a sweet little dragon isn't going to appeal to the types who like to drink ten Stellas then go down the pub for a beer, but with Mr Cerney's proven track record with the *Crash* series, we know that Spyro is going to be a very solid game.

End Of The Line

Unlike *Crash* though, Spyro is not an on-rails platform game – you're given the freedom to explore the 36 plus levels, set over seven different worlds, in a free roaming style. Full 3D games have often crashed and burned on the PlayStation (excuse the intended puns) due to poor camera handling, but Insomniac Games have made every effort to make the camera positioning as intuitive and user friendly as possible, resulting in a fast, smooth and ultimately better looking game. Of course this is helped by the depth of the carefully crafted visuals, which really wouldn't look out of place on the sequel to *Mario 64*.

"What we're looking at here is about as close to the fat Italian plumber's adventures in Nintendo land as we're ever likely to see."

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Hitting the triangle button takes you into 'look-around' mode, which allows you to check out every nook and cranny; the guard behind the cannon can be knocked-off, allowing Spyro to take charge of artillery duties.

The graphics are deeper than anything we've seen before on a PlayStation platformer and the feeling of scale is literally overwhelming at times. Take for instance the 'Ice Caves' level. Here you come across a variety of different scenery, which opens out into expansive chasms that seem to go on forever. Flying from one side to the other cannot be done without stopping on the minuscule platforms dotted around, making the scenery not only visually awe-inspiring, but also inextricably linked to the gameplay. Of course, this is just an example of one area but every other level has this type of environment-linked gameplay.

Platform Challenge?

Besides being the best looking platformer on the PlayStation, *Spyro* also promises to be one of the most playable, although at this point in time it's a little too easy. The game itself isn't marketed for kids but as it stands, it looks as though its natural audience will be the younger PlayStation owners and their parents. Hopefully though, Insomniac Games will make the game more challenging, so that it can find a home in the collections of both younger and older PlayStation gamers alike.

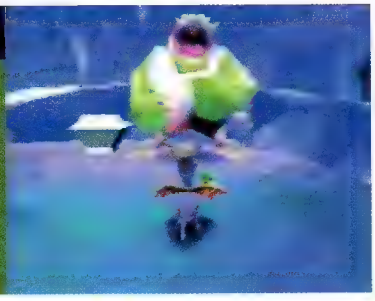
The action itself is centred around Spyro's plight to save his captured family, whom the evil 'Gnorc the Gnasty' has imprisoned inside crystal statues. Spyro's parents must have been on the Viagra though, because there are over 120 family members for you to rescue, whilst avoiding Gnorc's legion of dragon-hating nasties. Insomniac have included a huge portfolio of quirky characters for Spyro to either charge down or burn to a crisp with his fire breath. The problem is, everyone we encountered only ever needed one blast of hot halitosis or single bull-style charging to take out. This looks pretty silly when you meet a nasty that's five times as big as you, who only needs the same effort to get rid of as one that's smaller than you. Hopefully Insomniac will look at this, if and when they examine the difficulty of the game.

Spyro faces some tough competition this Christmas, and oddly enough, it's Sony's own *Crash Bandicoot 3* that poses the main challenge. Who'll come out on top in this platform battle is anybody's guess but with graphics as sumptuous as these, and potentially solid gameplay, *Crash* had better be ready for a fight.

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: No wonder we haven't seen any new Sugar Puff adverts – the Honey Monster's been moonlighting in Spyro; a short burst of flames aimed at these guard-tents will make them go up in true Glastonbury style.

The Firestarter

Spyro isn't confined to just one method of offing the enemies that he comes across on his travels. The most powerful weapon he has at his disposal is obviously his dragon flame. Rather than simply firing out a stream of fire though, it actually looks like he fires flame missiles. This looks pretty cool and can be extremely destructive. However, some of the monsters are immune to fire damage and they must be dealt with in a different way. This usually involves simply charging the enemy at full speed, in an attempt to either knock them over or, more satisfyingly, off a ledge.



Spyro the Dragon

Publisher: Sony

Developer: Insomniac Games

Release Date: November

Game Type: 3D Platformer

PAL Percentage Complete **90%**

The Early Verdict

Spyro the Dragon: For

Superbly crafted visuals – this is the closest the PlayStation has got to *Mario 64*.

Spyro the Dragon: Against

Spyro is just a little too sickly sweet and his enemies are too easy to kill.

Anticipation Rating 95%

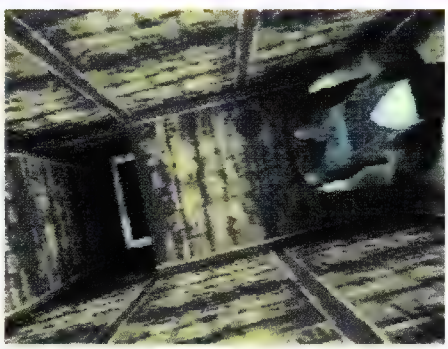
Potentially a Christmas blockbuster.

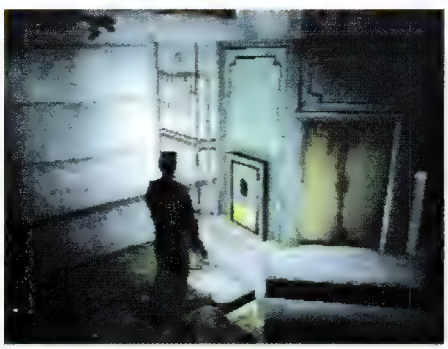
Concept Description

Mario 64 meets the limits of the PlayStation with a cutesy character.

Quiet now

Capcom's *Resident Evil* kicked off Survival Horror as a genre on the PlayStation but now Konami have their own shocker up their collective sleeves. We take an exclusive first look at the horror of Silent Hill.





FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: **Kids nowadays, eh? These little brats crawl around on the floor, knife in hand, just ready to stab you in the knee; the camera angles change dramatically to give you the best feel possible. Here you get a very claustrophobic overhead view; outside in the school grounds is a very creepy place to be at night.**

A Resident Evil rip-off of massive proportions, the whole style of Silent Hill smacks of Capcom's terrifying zombiefied adventure. A tad lazy and unoriginal, you would think. Until you start playing, that is...

Silent Hill boasts probably the most atmospheric gaming experience you could possibly imagine on the PlayStation. From the creepy music to the eerie settings, you really do feel on edge at all times. This, of course, is what Survival Horror is all about and although *Resident Evil 2* could be incredibly pant-filling on occasion, Silent Hill actually has your heart pumping throughout the game. Even during the quieter moments you're on the edge of your seat, waiting for the next mutant to attack, and although we've only played a few levels, we can testify that white hair is a very likely result of this fear inducing experience.

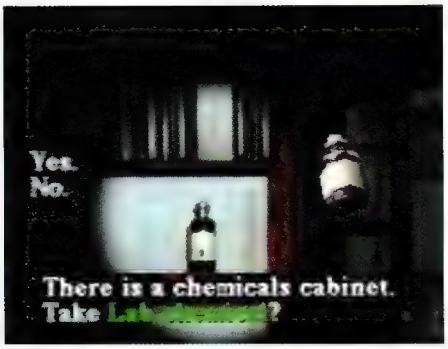
Missing Children

The game centres around a father's plight to find his missing daughter. You play the father who, after a car accident, wakes up to find his daughter gone from the wreckage. So, off you trudge to the nearby small American town of Silent Hill. Of course, as with every other small American town in every other game – or film for that matter – there has got to be something

"Once you've been sucked into the proceedings, some of these godless creations can be extremely creepy."

Silent Movies

The CG intro and cut-scenes in *Resident Evil 2* were probably the best we've ever seen on the PlayStation. Silent Hill hasn't topped the quality that we witnessed on *Resident Evil 2* but the cut scenes are of a very high standard, as you can see. The voice acting is far superior to *RE2*, though, making it look more like a dodgy episode of Neighbours compared to a Royal Shakespeare Company rendition of Hamlet. Or somewhere thereabouts.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: The puzzles take on a very *Resident Evil* style. Earlier in this area (The School) you find a note describing the gold in an old man's hand, which can be released by the Sage's acid. On locating the lab you happen to find a statue of a hand with some gold. Next door you (surprise, surprise) find some sulphuric acid. What are you going to do with it? Hmm...

fishy going on, and Silent Hill is no different. However, rather than the dreaded Tommyknockers, this small American town has been overrun by mutants that look almost like babies. It sounds ridiculous I know, but once you've been sucked into the proceedings, some of these godless creations can be extremely creepy. In fact, their resemblance to children leaves a lump in your throat after you've offed a few with your handgun.

What has actually happened in the town of Silent Hill is unknown at the moment, but as the game unfolds you'll be fed little morsels of the plot. This is done via some fantastic looking cut scenes and the usual in-game story telling devices. For instance, at the start of the game you find yourself walking through the weather-torn streets of Silent Hill, as you desperately search for your daughter. All's fine until you hear footsteps... Here you go seamlessly into a cut scene of a little girl walking, and then back into the game as she walks off into the fog. You give chase but every time you turn a corner, she's just going into the next one. You're led into a dark back-alley with the girl nowhere to be seen. Was it your daughter? Where has she gone? And what is that blood doing on the floor at the entrance to the alley?

Real-Time Horror

Graphically, Silent Hill does not quite match the almost photo-realistic *Resident Evil* games, which is due to the fact that everything in Silent Hill is real-time. This offers a more immersive feeling to the game, because it makes you feel as though your character is part of the whole scenario, and not just a load of polygons superimposed onto a bunch of pretty backgrounds. Konami have also made use of some superb lighting to add to the already cool graphical effects. At times the screen will be almost completely dark, save for your flashlight, or maybe a lit match. This builds tension to the extreme, as you are always waiting for something to jump out of the shadows and into your path. Fortunately, Silent Hill allows you to get sufficiently tooled up to deal with any of the hundreds of unearthly characters that require your quick thinking and fast firing to dispatch

With in-depth gameplay and superb real-time visuals it looks as though Silent Hill is going to be one of next year's biggest games. And with its tension inducing, pulse rate increasing aspects, Silent Hill will almost definitely become 1999's scariest game. Be afraid, be very afraid...

Silent Hill

Publisher: Konami

Developer: Konami

Release Date: First Qtr '99

Game Type: Survival Horror

PAL Percentage Complete **30%**

The Early Verdict

Silent Hill: For

Even after playing a few levels, we can testify that Silent Hill is set to take the PlayStation by storm. Picture the tension of thrillers like Scream and the gore of horrors like Nightmare On Elm Street, and you'll be halfway to describing Silent Hill.

Silent Hill: Against

The only real down-point of Silent Hill at the moment is that it's just a little too close to *Resident Evil* for its own good. Also, people with heart conditions and of a nervous disorder should not attempt to play it.

Anticipation Rating 85%

If Konami didn't have *Metal Gear Solid* on the way, Silent Hill would be one of the most talked about games this year.

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Should you enter that dark alleyway?; this blood and guts splat is just the start. Carry on in this direction and you're letting yourself in for more gore than even Freddy Krueger could handle.

Concept Description

Resident Hill.

Next corner's tough

The development teams behind *TOCA Touring Cars* and *Colin McRae Rally* are back, as Codemasters take to the road for another dose of motor sports simulation action, TOCA 2.

No deafening fanfare or snowballing hype accompanied *TOCA Touring Cars* when it was originally released by Codemasters at the tail-end of last year. In fact, the game pretty much snuck out onto the shelves, admirably achieving huge public and critical recognition – based purely upon its gameplay merits – whilst at the same time announcing its creators as masters of the 32-Bit racing simulation. Codemasters followed that up earlier this year with the equally well received *Colin McRae Rally*, which consequently went to number one in the PlayStation charts and once again courted an impressive array of over-90% review scores. Now TOCA 2, the official sequel to the original classic, is nearing completion. So, can the Codies continue to up the anté in a genre they seem to have grabbed so conclusively by the scruff of the neck?

"These fender-benders also benefit from real-time damage effects. Wings can be torn off, bonnets crumpled and windscreens shattered."

BOTTOM LEFT TO RIGHT: **The race commences and all 16 vehicles are visible on screen, with no slow down whatsoever; the transparent effects allow the player to witness the motion captured drivers going about their duties; the various camera positions lend the product a sense of true TV broadcast realism.**

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: The real-time spot effects are stunning – notice the glorious exhaust fumes!; the night races will feature light-sourced headlights, which are currently being programmed; the variable weather conditions will actually have an effect on the vehicles' handling.

Racing game updates and sequels have often proved to be little more than cheap cash-ins, changing little more than the driver roster, whilst adding a handful of minor tweaks. Quick to distance themselves from similar accusations, Codemasters have made sure that TOCA 2's wealth of enhancements likens the product more to a stand alone title, than simply another sequel.

Embrace The Resolution

TOCA 2 utilises a whole new graphical engine, improving upon frame rate, texture detail and screen resolution to increase the sense of realism and, of course, visual gloss. The improved graphical detail is most apparent in the modelling of the game's vehicles. Each has been totally remodelled, allowing transparency effects to be implemented, thus giving the player an opportunity to view the driver's reaction. Incidental animations enliven the trackside scenery: crowds spill onto the borders of the course, causing flocks of pigeons to disperse to the heavens in panic as the pack draws near. Bird lovers wanting to spare the lives of their feathered friends may find themselves involved in one of the many spectacular crash routines. These calculated fender-benders also benefit from real-time damage effects. Wings can be torn off, bonnets crumpled and windscreens shattered, as the driver hopelessly attempts to regain control.

The already aggressive nature of the CPU drones is now further enhanced by the tightening of the course design. There's a noticeable reduction in the width of each track, without the removal of any of the 16 strong racing line-up.

The basis of the gameplay has been drawn from the complete 1998 British Touring Car Championship and features all the tracks and drivers, including such big names as Nigel Mansell. Alongside their real life counterparts, each vehicle has been statistically modelled using their relevant manufacturer's telemetry data – stat freaks rejoice! Each course has also been remodelled, using landscape data provided by the Ordnance Survey Solution Centre.

Keeping It Real

In tune with the general authenticity of the title, pit stops are now an essential part of the race. These are taken during the middle lap, when the player is advised to pull in for a bit of a motion captured quickie before returning to the tarmac.

TOCA 2's race structure will be reflective of the 1998 meeting calendar, featuring the new Support Car Championships. Here the player competes against a starting grid of equally matched opponents and vehicles, ensuring that success is the reward for driving ability, not a more powerful engine. The international competition spans Germany, France, the USA and Scotland. The inclusion of a test circuit catering for the less experienced TOCA player gently introduces them to the delights of the skid pan, banked corners and an assortment of other track hazards.

Those seeking direct competition with a friend can engage in the two player split screen mode which, unlike the earlier outing, pits the players against a full grid of CPU drones. As with Psygnosis' *Formula One '98*, the PlayStation version features a four player link-up mode as well.

With three levels of skill, a variety of play modes – Championship, Time Trial, Single Race and the arcade friendly Battle Race – TOCA 2 looks sure to give the competition a run for their money when the green light is given this November.

The AI will ensure overtaking is definitely not an easy task.

TOCA 2

Publisher: Codemasters

Developer: In House

Release Date: November

Game Type: Racing Simulation

PAL Percentage Complete 60%

The Early Verdict

TOCA 2: For

A wealth of new play options, enhanced visuals and sound, topped off with the proven success of the original title: TOCA 2's racetracks are paved with gold.

TOCA 2: Against

Until the final code is unveiled, it's easy to be a bit sceptical of the promised differences between this and the previous release.

Anticipation Rating 80%

As the sequel to one of last year's best racing titles, anticipation levels are increasing daily as its launch date approaches.

Concept Description

Codemasters return to the TOCA motorsport and promise to deliver an all-new challenge.

A Real Live Wire

TOCA 2's vehicles and trackside structures have been completely remodelled for this sequel, hence their glorious new look. Why half of the models below have been made from bent coat hangers remains a bit of mystery...

Weirdo with a drink problem

Abe's first outing caused a sensation; now Oddworld Inhabitants' reluctant hero is back, with more stunning graphics, more puzzles and more humour. Follow me to find out more...

Flatulence and heroics don't usually go hand in hand but then Abe, gangly, bug-eyed star of Oddworld Inhabitants' new platformer, Abe's Exoddus, is no ordinary hero.

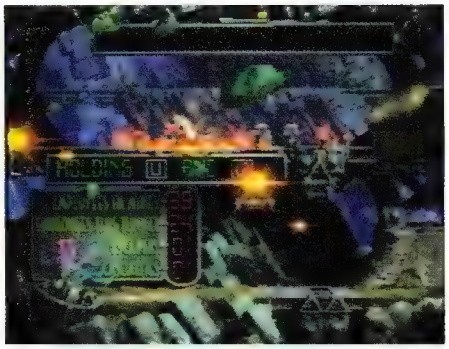
In his last hit, *Abe's Oddysee*, the cleaner-turned-champion gave up his day job at the meat processing plant to rescue his fellow Mudokon workers when he discovered that they were next in line for the mincing machines. Now, as he steps up on stage to receive the admiration of his peers, the unthinkable happens: Abe starts popping off gas, the crowd cracks up, and in the ensuing confusion poor Abe gets elbowed off stage and plunges to the ground, receiving a nasty knock on the head in the process. In the strange vision that follows, Abe discovers that his work is not yet done - the bones of his ancestors are being ground to create a tasty new drink, Soul Brew, and guess who's expected to save the day again?

Fun Factory

What follows at the Soul Brew factory and beyond will be a familiar mix to fans of Abe's first outing: lush pre-rendered backgrounds, combining organic shapes with industrial structures; engaging, fluidly animated characters and an extra helping of slapstick humour. Throughout the puzzle-laden 2D levels, Abe's basic tasks remain the same: rescuing the Mudokon slave labourers who are imprisoned at the factory and steering his lanky frame past vicious foes and traps. As before, a combination of dexterity and brain-power are required for

"The lovable characters and beautiful graphics will, once again, draw players into a believable and emotive world."

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: **In the bowels of their ancient burial grounds, blinded slaves mine the bones of their ancestors to make Soul Brew; Abe's fellow Mudokons may be dumb and cowardly but they're absolutely essential to his success.**



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Abe's mates will lend him a helping hand to access the areas a lone Mudokon cannot reach; you blew up a defenceless, trusting little Mudokon – how can you live with yourself?; just one burst of laughing gas is all it takes to have a Mudokon wetting his pants – figuratively speaking!

players to safely guide Abe through his beautifully drawn environment. A mistimed move or hasty action could not only jeopardise Abe's safety but that of his Mudokon mates too – and who could want to hurt those cute little fellas?

All the best touches from *Oddysee* have been retained too, such as Abe's speech, his ability to possess the Slig guards, his wide variety of moves and the use of bird portals to free his comrades. In many ways Exoddus seems like a continuation of the original game but that's not to say there's nothing new on offer.

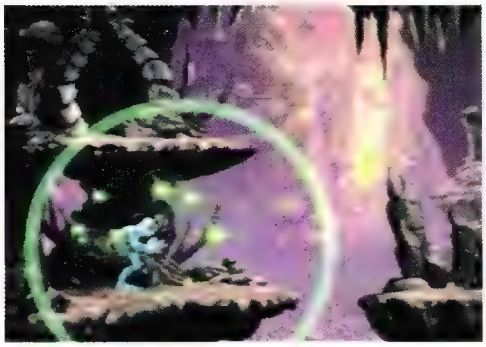
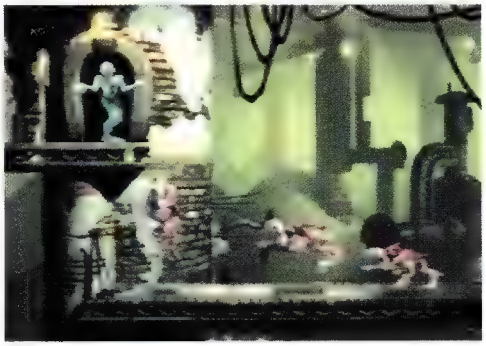
Brew Crew

For starters, Abe's not on his own this time - thanks to a boosted vocabulary he can gather a whole crew of Mudokons around him and then set them to work, pulling levers and opening doors to aid their rescue. As well as the levers, lifts and mines of the last game, there are valves to turn and electric portals to navigate.

Things aren't that simple though, because Abe has some new problems to deal with too, chief among them being the doses of laughing gas dished out at the factory. This gas sends the Mudokon workers charging about in a giggling frenzy - straight into the path of a waiting guard or charged bomb. Only one thing can halt a Mudokon in this condition: a swift slap 'round the chops. The trouble is, some Mudokons are more feisty than others and are liable to take a swing back at you - the ensuing slapfest can get messy!

Appropriately enough – considering it was an excess of wind that got Abe into this whole mess in the first place – he also has an enhanced fart, complete with puff of gas, which is guaranteed to elicit a chuckle from both on-screen Mudokons and human players alike.

In spite of all the enhancements though, Exoddus remains distinctly similar to *Abe's Oddysee*, which will prove to be both its main strength and a possible weakness. The lovable, fallible characters and beautifully produced graphics will, once again, draw players into a believable and emotive world but anyone expecting a whole new concept may be disappointed.

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Abe can produce power rings in later levels – ideal for exploding nearby mines; the Sligs' guard dogs are vicious, fast moving beasts with a taste for Mudokon flesh! Luckily for you, they're also pretty dumb.

It's A Gas!

Co-operation's the name of the game in Abe's Exoddus: sections with multiple levers to pull and valves to turn appear regularly, which means Abe often needs some help from his fellow Mudokons. Trouble is, some of these switches release laughing gas too and in the ensuing confusion the only thing the Mudokons are good for is giggling...

Abe's Exoddus

Publisher: **GT Interactive**

Developer: **Oddworld Inhabitants**

Release Date: **November**

Game Type: **2D Platformer**

PAL Percentage Complete 85%

The Early Verdict

Abe's Exoddus: For

Abe and his equally lovable pals are cute and cheeky enough to capture the hardest of hearts, whilst new moves, speech and puzzles build on the proven success formula of *Abe's Oddysee*...

Abe's Exoddus: Against

...but the similarities may prove a let down for those who've played the first game and expected more this time round.

Anticipation Rating 75%

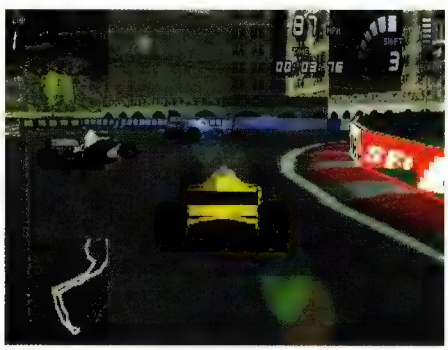
Abe's Oddysee was a big success, so this sequel has an established fan base to draw on - and to satisfy.

Concept Description

Unlikely hero pits brain against brawn to rescue his people from servitude.

Get your motor running

Psygnosis return to Formula One racing for the second sequel to their 1996 classic. Any comments on this preview build, Murray? "As you can see visually, with your eyes, things are shaping up nicely..." So your hopes are rather high at this stage of development? "With half the race gone, there is still half the race still to go, unless I'm very much mistaken." Err, thanks Murray and now over to the preview...



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: **Lens flare – now there's a wonderfully original idea; the helicopter view has often been the subject of argument, as problems concerning handling often arise when it's used; the two player split screen mode currently runs at the same frame rate as the single player mode.**

Screeching tyres and inane commentary can mean only one thing: Psygnosis have once more turned their attentions to the world of Formula One racing. Keeping in mind the success of their two previous title, this third instalment was inevitable.

Formula One '98 carries the official F1 license and thus all the many bonuses that such an endorsement entails. Last year's legal wranglings with the F1 governing body have obviously been resolved, which means that the starting grid will contain every team and all the drivers, prepared to do battle on all the familiar tracks.

The performance of both the teams as a whole and individual drivers will be based upon statistically correct attributes, reflective of their previous season rankings. The stronger teams are garnished with increased skill levels and a better standing in the starting grid, thus allowing the fresh-faced player a less taxing route to their initial footing on the winner's podium.

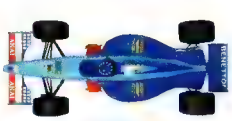
Pole Position

To prevent players simply relying on their machine and not their skill as a driver, the CPU AI has been increased, as has the gradient

Do You Endorse This?

The official logo and vehicle related bliss that will greet the F1 fan when they delve into the game code.

ARROWS



BENETTON

FERRARI

JORDAN

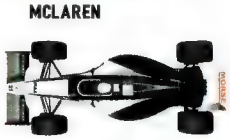
MCLAREN

WILLIAMS

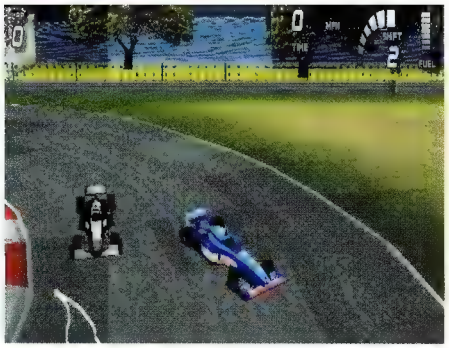
PROST

SAUBER

STEWART



TYRELL

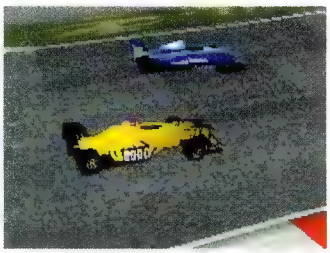


FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Take care not to use the rear view when attempting to corner – a lesson we were about to learn; the multiple viewpoints remove some of the confusion that often arises during the heat of a race; crash calculations promise some spectacular fender benders, with the benefit of real-time damage.

"The blissfully inept dual commentary of Murray Walker and Martin Brundell will again be responsible for muffled chuckles across the land, as the fellas return to deliver further nuggets of wisdom as the race progresses."

of the learning curve. This ensures that the levels of competition and challenge will remain tough throughout, with only the most competent of racers getting to claim the winner's wealth.

Aside from the obvious increase in the ability of the drones, the player will be subject to a number of underhand tactics. Expect to experience an array of manoeuvres that would raise Schumacher's eyebrows, including such delights as opponents cutting across your path, then gently nudging the front of the vehicle to send your car spiraling into the barrier. The AI now also includes team work: an ailing racer will simply put themselves and a number of the opposition out of the race, to ensure the victory of their fellow team mate. The racers will also unite against a single competitor if their dubious tactics have previously cost them those all important seconds.



Formalistic Rompings

The vehicle dynamics have also been enhanced to mirror their tarmac peers, with marked changes in road handling, speed and acceleration. Each one adds to the promise of a highly realistic racing experience, albeit without the possibility of death. This increase in realism is not only related to the race mechanics though; F1 '98 also benefits from enhanced 3D modeling, with a noticeable increase in the polygon count per vehicle.

The blissfully inept dual commentary of Murray Walker and Martin Brundell will again be responsible for muffled chuckles across the land, as the fellas return to deliver further nuggets of wisdom as the race progresses. In addition, the expansion of the limited track-side activity of the previous titles will undoubtedly lead to an increased sense of 'being there'. The most important inclusion in this area for F1 '98 fanatics, will be the increased communication between the driver and his motion captured pit crew, meaning that pit-stops need not have such a damaging impact upon gameplay.

Utilising both the split screen method and the link cable, Psygnosis have incorporated a four player option, which allows players to race against a full starting grid of 22 vehicles, or a less complex Versus mode with only four racers on the track. This is a welcome inclusion, and one which was sadly missing from the previous games.

Formula One '98 remains the only officially endorsed Formula One title available to the PlayStation audience – and therefore the title's success is guaranteed amongst fans – but this is something that will leave the more sceptical reader distinctly unimpressed. Questions have to be asked as to the mass market appeal of yet another Formula One title: after all, just how different can this follow up be?

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: The replay provides a perfect showcase for the enhanced visual engine; incidental effects and increased trackside activity increase realism and visual gloss.

Formula One '98

Publisher: Psygnosis

Developer: Visual Sciences

Release Date: October 7th

Game Type: Racing

PAL Percentage Complete 75%

The Early Verdict

Formula One '98: For

The only officially endorsed Formula One racing title, with all the current season drivers and vehicles. Everything fans can possibly want from a reproduction of the motor sport.

Formula One '98: Against

Essentially just another up-date of the original code. Will fans be tempted to shell out £50 when the original outing has just begun its Platinum run?

Anticipation Rating 70%

After two competent releases, one has to wonder how much life is left in the old dog... Can Psygnosis recapture the F1 magic, or will this instalment simply be business as usual?

Concept Description

It's Formula One racing, what more do you need to know?

Turn on, tune in, fall off...

Marty McFly did it in his second big screen feature. EA did it, with the help of a dodgy French cartoon character. Now Psygnosis' Psybadek tries its hand at hoverboarding. Let's hope they don't fall flat on their arse.

Psybadek

Publisher: Psygnosis

Developer: In House

Release Date: November

Game Type: Platform Twist

PAL Percentage Complete **80%**

The Early Verdict

Psybadek: For

The variety of gameplay features and lush visuals are perfectly complemented by the musical involvement of David Holmes and BRA – what a package!

Psybadek: Against

Too many cooks may spoil the proverbial broth. Can such diverse game styles be successfully blended, or will the outcome be a sour tasting mess?

Anticipation Rating 55%

Will the huge development period be worth it? Coming from the creative team behind the wonderful *Wipeout 2097*, can Psybadek fail?

Concept Description

Skateboarding under the influence of the non-prescription stuff.

Stunning visuals and fast-paced gameplay

combine in Psygnosis' newie, Psybadek, which looks clear cut to set their flagging release schedule right back on track. This futuristic fusion of platform and racing genres owes as much to *Mario* as it does to *Wipeout*.

Psybadek is based around the exploits of a bunch of typically clichéd, anime style youthful characters and their fave pastime, hoverdeking. One day, whilst the gang were happily wasting a day at the local skate park, practicing tricks and wearing very baggy trousers, an evil time shifting Krakken made his (essential to the daft plot) guest appearance. Now he's invaded their peaceful planet and ensnared the members of the Dek gang, and it's up to you to save the day.

Cutting Air, Dude!

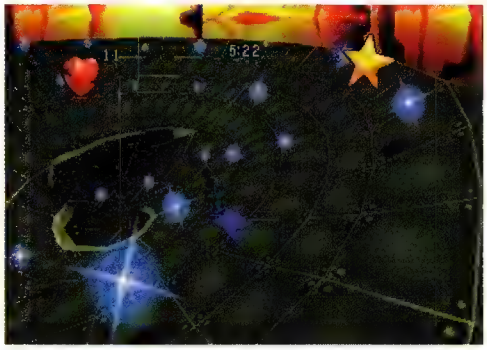
Psybadek's gameplay is true to the traditions of the racing genre, in that the player must get themselves from point A to point B in the shortest possible time period. However, each level also contains elements from several other, unrelated genres. Ideas such as the penguin shooting gallery may sound completely out of place on the page, yet (rather bizarrely) they do seem logical in-game.

The varied design of each track, of which there are 40 in total, ensures that all of the levels are very different, although each one forces the player to avoid obstacles, perform stunts and battle enemies, whilst seeking out essential pick ups. These add-ons can provide energy or speed, or give you access to otherwise hidden levels.

"Elements such as the penguin shooting gallery may sound completely out of place, yet (rather bizarrely) they do seem logical in-game."

After choosing one of the game's two leads, the player is thrown into a bizarre world where nothing is quite what it seems. The main root of the gameplay is, quite simply, to make your way through each level, rescue a buddy, then proceed to the next stage, and so on until the inevitable end of game confrontation.

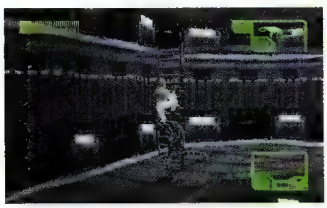
Psybadek's gameplay is a far cry from the conventional blend of blasting and racing. After all, where else would one encounter confrontations with dive bombing penguins, vicious tumble dryers and countless other adversaries capable of warping a normal human mind? Crazy, but undeniably cool.

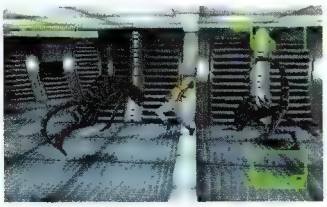


FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: The shield is particularly useful, in an obvious kind of way; the complexity of the level design deserves a suitably hearty pat on the back. This helter skelter style track provides a dizzying experience as you hoverdek around it at speed.

Ripley returns

The film may have disappointed some hardcore fans with its far-fetched plot but there's no denying that, like Ripley, the Alien story still lives on...





FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: **The highly intelligent aliens only need seconds to figure out how to get at you; Ripley gets caught between two of Giger's finest. However, their attack patterns are not always this simple; another example of the atmospheric lighting that hides some heart-stopping surprises.**

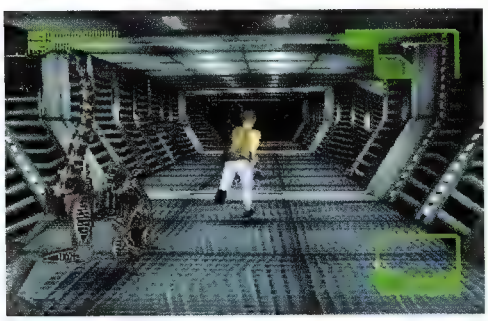
The deep space horror of Alien Resurrection is being converted to PlayStation by Argonaut Software but Fox, the people behind the film, are here to lend a hand. In fact, they have offered anything from the complete soundtrack and scripts to models and drawings that were used in the early stages of the film's production. Apart from having access to almost everything seen in the film, Argonaut have also used stuff which was intended for the film but never made it. Hopefully then, the player should get a complete Aliens experience and not just excerpts and set pieces from the movie.

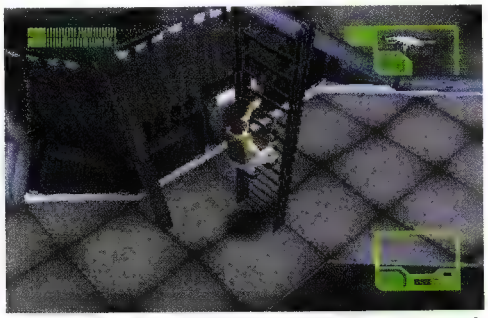
That said, Alien Resurrection does follow the film's plot very closely, which means players are able to play as different characters throughout the game, which should hopefully add some variety to the basic action. Argonaut have managed to get the characters looking as close to their real-life counterparts as possible, although some detail has been purposefully left out, due to licensing.

Alongside the superb 3D visuals sits a stunning cinematic soundtrack that has actually been produced with the help of the original film score team. This makes for some of the best atmospheric music that we've heard. The sound effects have been taken directly from the film and most of the main actors have been drafted to offer voice overs, which finish off the soundtrack perfectly.

"Alien Resurrection promises to encompass the whole of the film, as well as the complete Aliens world."

Unlike previous Alien games, Alien Resurrection promises to encompass the whole of the film, as well as the complete Aliens world. With this kind of help from Fox, and Argonaut on the case, this promise could well be fulfilled.





FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: **Where would an Alien licence be without the obligatory 'I'm going to skewer you from behind' scene?; the unique camera will move to find the best viewing position, no matter what your character is doing on screen.**

Alien Resurrection

Publisher: Fox Interactive

Developer: Argonaut

Release Date: January '99

Game Type: Movie Licence

PAL Percentage Complete **55%**

The Early Verdict

Alien Resurrection: For

Well it's an Alien licence for a start, but we've seen some dodgy ones in our time. Argonaut have received a massive amount of help from the film makers though, so this could be the definitive Aliens title.

Alien Resurrection: Against

So far, the game is looking pretty sparse, so we'd like to see more alien cap-popping action. The camera system isn't quite finished yet but expect Argonaut to perfect it before the game hits the shelves.

Anticipation Rating 80%

The film may not have been all that great, but everyone is waiting for the game.

Concept Description

Tomb Raider ethics set in the nightmare world of Ripley, Queen and co.

The end is nigh

The movie tie-in has long been associated with disappointment and cash-ins. Optimistically, Activision have adopted a far different approach: hire a megastar, motion capture his likeness, sample his voice and base a game around the results. Sound thinking, or a short cut to the Apocalypse?

Apocalypse

Publisher: Activision

Developer: Neversoft

Release Date: December

Game Type: Shoot-'em-up

PAL Percentage Complete **80%**

The Early Verdict

Apocalypse: For

The wealth of optical effects and loud explosions make this a glorious sensory experience, akin to the original concept of stepping into an interactive action movie.

Apocalypse: Against

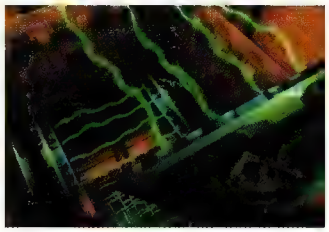
The early concept of the buddy-buddy styled gameplay generated much interest, but since this has proved unworkable, the final coding of Apocalypse is little more than a visually intense shoot-'em-up.

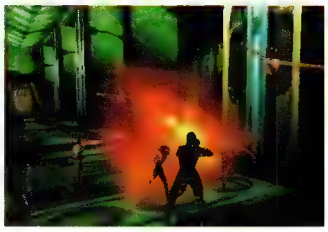
Anticipation Rating 75%

Ignoring the usual questions concerning lifespan for the moment, the glorious graphics and non-stop action make this a truly exciting prospect. Yippee Kay-A, Melon Farmer, etc.

Concept Description

It's a 3D blaster with Bruce Willis taking the lead role. Yes, that Bruce Willis! Did we mention Bruce Willis was in it?





FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: The motion captured Bruce is near perfect, even down to his bald spot; having avoided clipping and pop up, the visuals offer much depth; each weapon will deal a differing blow, the laser simply slices a foe in two.

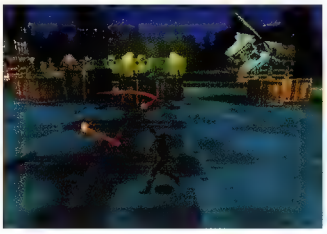
Is the end of the world upon us? Activision's Apocalypse has taken the movie cross-over one step further, seeking the involvement of an A-List action hero, Bruce Willis. The original concept hoped to produce a buddy-buddy style structure, with the player adopting the role of Willis' side-kick in a futuristic adventure romp. Sadly this proved unworkable, so the original concept was scrapped, in favour of a more traditional shoot-'em-up structure.

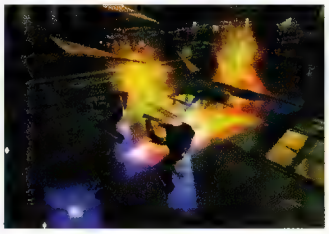
Having placed a hearty chunk of change in Bruce's pocket, Activision retained close links with the balding one. Stepping into the game's lead role, Willis becomes Trey Kincaide, a foul mouthed loner facing the wrath of those Biblical death-bringers, the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. His battle rages across twelve third person perspective levels, eight sprawling apocalyptic zones and four smaller sub-areas, concluding with a battle against a boss character. The free-roaming main areas have a similar feel to that of ASCII's *One*: a single warrior facing insurmountable odds against a huge army of foes – Die Hard 4, anyone? The wealth of weapons available, ranging from homing missiles to flamethrowers, does even the odds somewhat and generates some very memorable visuals but the gameplay remains true to the rules of the genre.

In terms of graphics the developers, Neversoft, have crafted a vast, visually intensive world that is nothing short of stunning. Enhancing this aesthetic bliss further is the use of cinematic camera angles and numerous cut scenes, which use the game engine in favour of pre-rendered scenes.

"Having proved unworkable, the original concept was scrapped in favour of a more traditional shoot-'em-up structure."

Admittedly the shoot-'em-up structure of Apocalypse must raise questions about the lifespan of the title, as must the removal of the original premise. However, initial impressions are very favourable and the use of Willis in the title role has apparently stretched far beyond being merely a basic marketing ploy. So, is this the first truly interactive movie experience or just a great blaster with added Bruce-appeal? The answers will come, my children.





Crash and burn

Crash Bandicoot has been the subject of a great deal of hype and attention since he was first hoisted upon the games world by Sony. Unfortunately, the quality of his games has never quite afforded him the platform needed to be another Mario or Sonic. Maybe it'll be third time lucky...

Oi, blood lusting megalomaniacs! Just what is your problem? Global domination can't be that tricky; Sony have managed it, so why can't you? First up you devise these wonderful plans to bring an end to life as we know it, then you build equally elaborate tools of destruction and surround yourself with an army of loyal followers. Next you have to make some crazy demands to the governments of the world...and then completely bugger it all up in the last minute.

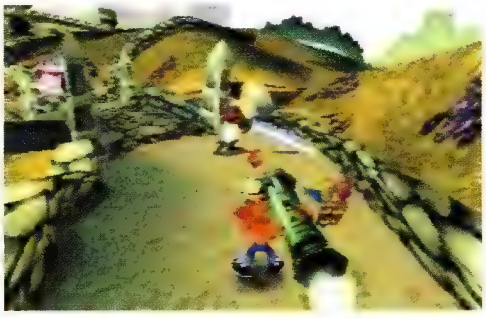
After giving the audience what can be judged as just more of the same with their first sequel, developers Naughty Dog have returned to their original code to perform a massive overhaul for this, the third part of the Crash series. The style of the all-new game environments will be instantly recognisable to Crash fans, but the levels of depth and variety have been vastly increased to lure in the previously unsold.

"Admittedly, there is absolutely no shame in losing the battle to such square-jawed heroes as James Bond, but to have your devious plans thwarted by a cuddly toy in a pair of Nikes is a bit of a joke."

Admittedly, there is absolutely no shame in losing the battle to such square jawed heroes as James Bond, but to have your devious plans thwarted by a cuddly toy in a pair of Nikes is a bit of a joke. Still, undeterred by his previous complete lack of success, Dr Neo Cortex – arch nemesis of Sony's leading platform hero, Crash Bandicoot – returns for another pop at ending the human race. Having tired of his more conventional methods, Cortex has turned to time travel to fulfil his crazed desires. Tearing open the space-time continuum he has gained access to Ancient Egypt, Rome, Medieval England and the Prehistoric time zones. Fear not, as Crash is close behind to repair any damage this quantum leaping nutter can do.

The opportunities for player interaction also promise to be vastly improved, allowing for greater path deviation and freedom of movement, although the general structure of the game remains strictly on rails. Many new characters, both friends and foes, line up to greet or eat the title character, with the player able to hitch a ride upon the back of a friendly baby dragon, or step into the shoes of Crash's female cousin. In addition, Crash has been in training since his last outing, learning some new moves, including the handling of a super powerful laser-guided apple bazooka.

Crash's third adventure has retained his trademark visual quality and in the very early build we played, offering only five levels, the gameplay enhancements raised more than a few smiles. Will this be the Bandicoot at his best?



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: The player's progression is once more menu driven, allowing access to a number of levels at one given time; the addition of weapons has greatly altered the gameplay – thankfully for the better.

Crash Bandicoot 3

Publisher: Sony

Developer: Naughty Dog

Release Date: December

Game Type: Platformer

PAL Percentage Complete **65%**

The Early Verdict

Crash Bandicoot 3: For

The Bandicoot is back for his biggest adventure yet, featuring all new levels, playable characters and gameplay. Crash 3 has all the makings of yet another smash.

Crash Bandicoot 3: Against

The list of new features and gameplay ingredients is indeed impressive but it's still very hard to shake off the disappointment of the first sequel. Will history repeat itself?

Anticipation Rating 75%

Once more Crash looks the part, but few will be impressed if the gameplay is yet another rehash of the original's formula.

Concept Description

Triangular Basil Brush lookalike charges around a pseudo-3D environment, in a predictable attempt at taking your hard-earned dosh.

The Millennium Bug is here

You either loved or hated *Virus* but it was only the people who couldn't grasp the control system that hated it. Grolier hope to rectify this...

V2000

Publisher: Grolier

Developer: Frontier Developments

Release Date: 2nd October

Game Type: Combat/Flight Sim

PAL Percentage Complete 90%

The Early Verdict

V2000: For

Most PlayStation owners over the age of twenty should remember David Braben's original *Virus* game, and V2000 stays very close to the original in gameplay terms. The graphics have been brought bang up to date though, so V2000 has classic gameplay with PlayStation graphics.

V2000: Against

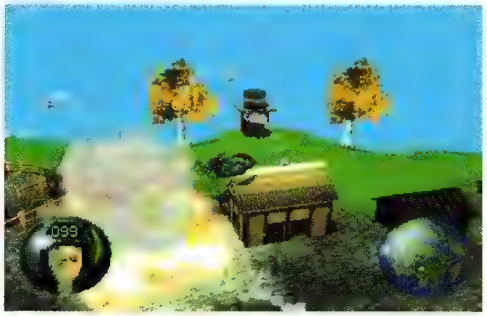
With so much going on on-screen, and the ship being so hard to control, things can get pretty confusing at times. This isn't helped by the lack of perspective, which means that sometimes it's hard to even work out which direction you're going in.

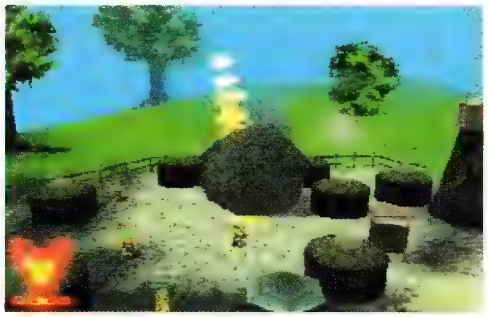
Anticipation Rating 60%

Anybody who's played the original will want to get their hands on this, but newer gamesplayers may take more convincing.

Concept Description

The classic combat game, *Virus* gets a PlayStation facelift.





FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Nearly everything on a level can be destroyed and we had great fun blowing up as many villages as possible; *Virus* has no flashy CG intro but this real-time intro is a refreshing change from the norm.

When the grapevine told us that a version of the classic *Virus* was winging its way to the PlayStation, we were a little surprised to say the least. It was a perfect computer game but we were a little wary of how it would turn out on Sony's 32-bit console. After getting the chance to playtest Grolier's V2000 though, we've been reassured that the PlayStation's *Virus* incarnation is every bit as playable, not to say exhausting as the original.

uses thrust to get into the air and direction to make it travel. Sounds simple? Well it isn't. The second you let go of the controls the ship will point downwards and start to drop, so you find yourself constantly feathering the controls in an attempt just to keep your ship in the air and upright. Thankfully for those of us who are coordinationally challenged, there are easier, more traditional modes of control for you to try. To get the real *Virus* effect though,

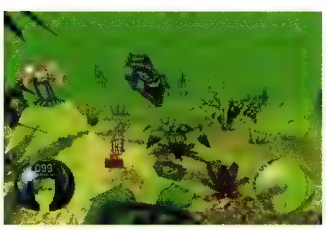
"The original game centred on the innovative design and control of the ship and V2000 is no different."

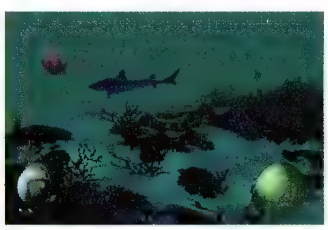
The game centres around your plight to rid the world of the usual marauding aliens, but this time they have a special weapon up their collective sleeve. The 'Hives' spit out an all-devouring virus that is threatening to infect the world and cause more destruction than the aliens themselves.

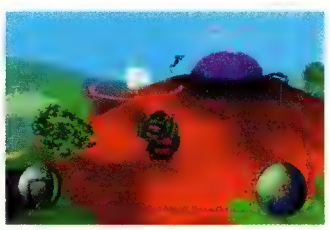
Of course this is where you come in. As pilot of a high-tech hovercraft/aircraft, it's your job to rid the world of the alien threat and the virus itself, which would be easy if you had a normal aircraft. However, the original game centred on the innovative design and control of the ship and V2000 is no different.The ship you need to persevere in the original mode, which includes the original mouse control option.

Graphically, rather than just going with the multicoloured patchwork quilt effect, Mr Braben and his team have decided to make the landscapes as real looking as possible. There are six different types of environment, including Castle World, Ice World, Alien World and Colorado World. You even get the chance to go under the ocean and explore the great blue depths.

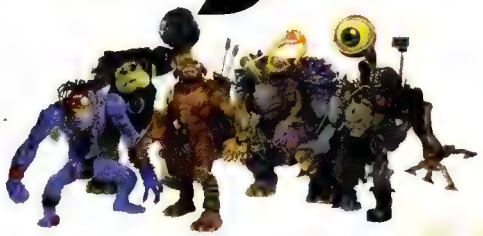
V2000 promises to bring an all-time classic up to date – just make sure you persevere with those damn controls!





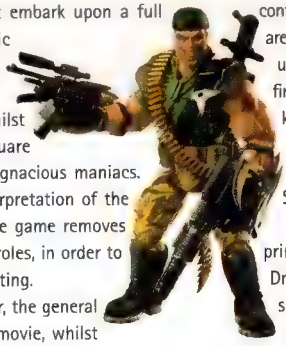


Mini military madness



Small Soldiers, the second big release from the creators of *The Lost World* videogame, provides an intriguing fusion of third person exploration, weapons based combat and Action Man.

Gung-ho action figures with huge weapons provide the inspiration for the second title from movie maestro Steven Spielberg's pet software company, Dreamworks Interactive. After their visually glorious but terminally shallow premiere, *The Lost World*, Dreamworks stay on familiar ground with yet another home grown movie licence – Joe Dante's Small Soldiers. The movie incarnation follows a team of artificially enhanced action figures that embark upon a full scale conflict with their plastic counterparts. Intriguingly, the movie places the audience's sympathy with the monstrously unpleasant Gorgonites, whilst portraying the logical heroes, the square jawed Commando Elite squadron, as pugnacious maniacs. However – as with the PlayStation interpretation of the Jurassic Park sequel – Small Soldiers the game removes the lead characters from their celluloid roles, in order to place the action in a far less limiting setting.



The player assumes the role of Archer, the general of the Gorgonite army and star of the movie, whilst the game plot deviates greatly to examine the origins of the battle that inspired the concept for the movie's script:

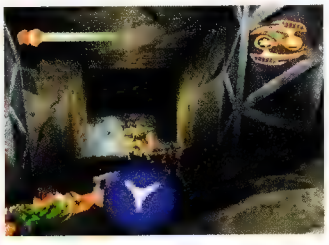
"A long time ago upon the distant planet of Gorgon, a peaceful way of life was torn apart by the invasion of the warmongering humanoid Commando Elite. Conflict raged and casualties were high, leaving only a rag-tag band of warriors to save their home world...dum, de, dum, dum, dum."

What follows is an action orientated third-person blend of adventure and strategy, as this battle for domination continues. With numerous weapon power ups and add-ons to be collected, the action levels promise to live up to the expectations of even the most discerning of battle-hungry gamers. For those seeking a more strategic approach to their death dealing, Archer will be given access to various traps and decoys, plus the ability to deploy his fellow CPU controlled troops – four in total – to overthrow key offensive areas. The miniature warfare spans 20 3D levels, each based upon a differing mission parameter, meaning the player will find themselves faced with much greater tasks than simply killing everything that moves. Additionally, there will be a two player split screen mode, catering for the kind of deathmatch style scenarios that action fans lust after. Sadly this option was unavailable in this early build.

Utilising similar technology to that used in the movie, primarily the highly realistic Morph-X animation, Dreamworks hope to reclaim the big screen's visual splendour without this having a detrimental effect on Small Soldier's gameplay. More cinematic input is present too, with the inclusion of the original score and the employment of Tommy Lee Jones to voice the lead Commando, Chip Hazard.

Small Soldiers shows great promise: its obvious visual appeal and appealing cinematic origins are hard to ignore. That said, we prefer to remain cautious with our optimism after our painful encounter with Dreamworks Interactive's *Lost World*, which inspires the question: have they learnt some important lessons?

"The game removes the lead characters from their celluloid roles, in order to place the action in a far less limited setting."



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Lighting effects add to the level of player immersion; the collection of items inspires comparison with the platform genre; the sniper mode is rather limiting during close quarter combat.

Small Soldiers

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Developer: Dreamworks

Release Date: October

Game Type: 3D Adventure

PAL Percentage Complete 70%

The Early Verdict

Small Soldiers: For

Having been produced in complete cooperation with the creators of the movie's special effects, the visual quality and character animation is excellent.

Small Soldiers: Against

The update is very poor, limiting the horizon greatly and thus affecting gameplay. The ratio of foes to hero is also worryingly low, leaving some areas rather sparse.

Anticipation Rating 50%

It's based on one of the summer's hottest US movies, a sure-fire smash during its European run. One has to wonder how much dependence has been placed upon the big screen hype machine, in favour of game development.

Concept Description

Action Man turns nasty against a bunch of friendly alien types.

The Martians are coming!

The B-Movie is something that, however corny it may be, always has the power to keep you watching till the end. Does GT's latest offering have the same power to keep you playing? We find out...

B-Movie

Publisher: **GT Interactive**

Developer: **King of the Jungle**

Release Date: **25th Oct**

Game Type: **B-Movie Sim**

PAL Percentage Complete **90%**

The Early Verdict

B-Movie: For

The 1950s B-Movie setting works perfectly, especially when the graphics are this good. You'd think that some frame rate would be lost to keep the graphics up to scratch but B-Movie actually runs at an astounding 50/60 frames per second!

B-Movie: Against

Gauging the distance of your ship against the Martian flying saucers can sometimes be a bit of a guessing match, meaning that you either fly right by them, crash or simply aim your shot incorrectly.

Anticipation Rating 65%

A dark horse that could take the Christmas charts by storm. Maybe.

Concept Description

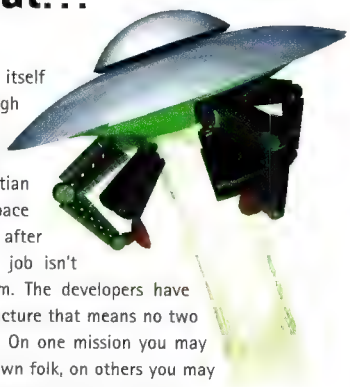
Attack of the Martian scum with plenty of B-Movie fun.

Blasting alien scum is the staple diet of many a PlayStation game but how many use the classic 1950s B-Movie as the setting for their Martian mauling action? None, yet...

Taking influence from the whole of the B-Movie genre, B-Movie the game starts in an initially sleepy American town. Sleepy that is, until the Martians attack. As usual, you are employed to halt this evil other-worldly threat by using a wealth of alien technology. You don't start with a hangar full of hardware though. As the game progresses you will collect icons which, when you have enough, can be allocated to your scientists in order to research better weaponry and craft. And believe me, you'll need it.

The game starts off in sedate mode, with a training session and a few 'save the farm' type missions but in trying to stick to the style of its namesakes, B-Movie also tries to mirror the space B-Movie type of plot. When the aliens first attack they are only interested in the town, but as more arrive they spread out to the cities and then on to the capital, Washington DC, which seems to be the final goal for any alien race. However, instead of leaving it at Washington, B-Movie the game heads for outer space and on to the Martians' home-world, where it's your turn to dish out the punishment.

The first thing that we noticed on playing B-Movie was how easy it was to get to grips with the controls. This doesn't mean that the game itself isn't challenging enough though. You constantly find yourself surrounded by all manner of Martian flying saucers and space craft. They're not all after you though and your job isn't simply to destroy them. The developers have installed a mission structure that means no two missions are the same. On one mission you may have to rescue some town folk, on others you may have to escort a chopper carrying scientists, or survey a crop circle. One stage even has you looking after a couple on their wedding day, as they speed to the shops in their car to steal some clothes!

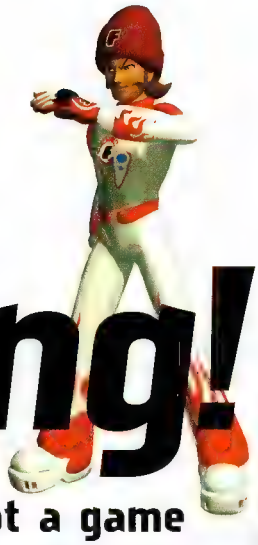


It's very rare for a game to have everything, but from what we've seen here, it looks as though B-Movie certainly fits this particular bill. It's got cool graphics, bucket-loads of speed, intuitive controls, in-depth and exciting gameplay, and even a sense of humour. Watch the skies then, because the Martians are coming...

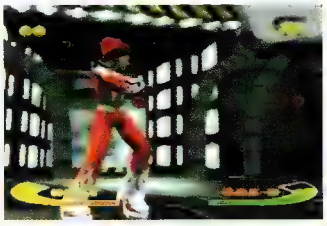
"The developers have installed a mission structure that means no two missions are the same."

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Some of the missions order you to escort certain vehicles. We're not making a good job of keeping this chopper safe though; there's a plethora of ships available to you but to get some of the better ones you'll have to put in a lot of research.

Shake your groove thang!



First it was a game about a rapping dog, now we've got a game based solely on making a rag-tag crew of dancers shake their thang – handbags optional.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: **Holiday disco at the Copa, Copa Cabana; techno, techno, techno-notice (tee-hee); breaking in a burning warehouse may sound cool, but don't try this at home, kids.**

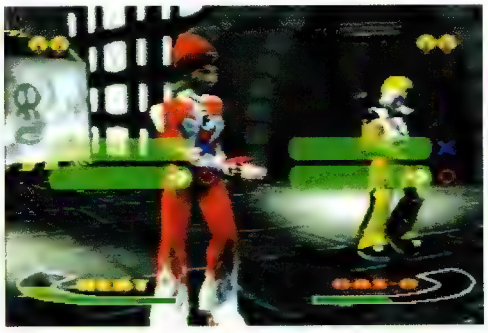
PlayStation disco divas excepted, most people may not have heard about Bust-A-Groove, which was originally titled *Bust-A-Move Rhythm & Dance* in Japan. Those who have will know that it's another one of those Japanese oddities of a game, based around dancing to a juke-box full of Japanese pop.

The general premise is to choose one of ten obscure characters, who could be anything from a flared-suit wearing John Travolta-alike to a cool babe dressed in a pussycat costume. After that you hit one of ten dance floors, each with different themes and music. Once the house lights dim and the disco lights kick into action, it's time to cut a rug which, to the rhythmically challenged, can actually prove a lot tougher than you'd imagine.

To make your character dance, you have to tap the joypad buttons in time with the music. Symbols appear on the screen to alert you as to what button to press next and as the song progresses you have to hit different combinations to make your character do more spectacular moves. The finale of each string of moves is the 'Freeze', where your character will strike a pose in true Madonna fashion. After this the sequence is reset and you have to build your moves back up again.

The selection of characters gathered to dance the night away on Bust-A-Groove is as varied as it is whacked out. Each is completely different and moves more smoothly than Michael Jackson on the best ecstasy. They aren't particularly fast but the solid looking graphics are perfectly suited to this very fluid style of animation. The backgrounds are also well drawn and realistic, and although there are only ten to start off with, you don't seem to get bored, especially in two player mode – which is where Bust-A-Groove excels. In fact, we reckon it might get a tad tedious in one player mode, but get some friends around and it will literally have you dancing the night away.

"Once the house lights dim and the disco lights kick into action, it's time to cut a rug."



Bust-A-Groove

Publisher: Sony

Developer: Enix

Release Date: November

Game Type: Disco Sim

PAL Percentage Complete 85%

The Early Verdict

Bust-A-Groove: For

How many games have you seen that are based on dancing the night away? So, we've got originality for a start. The music is also pretty damn cool, in a sad Japanese pop kind of way. It demands a listen before you slam it for that description, though.

Bust-A-Groove: Against

In one player mode we reckon Bust-A-Groove may get a little tedious after a while and even though the music is cool, it does become repetitive. A nice touch would have been to have the opportunity to download your own music – *Fluid* tracks, perhaps.

Anticipation Rating 55%

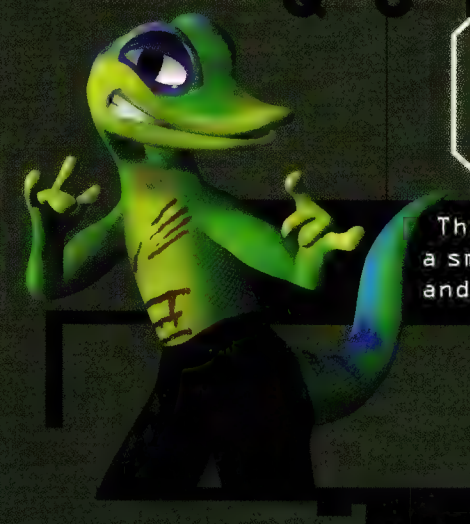
Not everyone is dying for a dancing game but they'll find it hard to ignore when it arrives.

Concept Description

Saturday Night Fever meets sixth form disco.

QUESTIONABLE CHARACTERS

QUESTIONABLE CHARACTERS



The world of videogames has never been the same since a small yellow circle with a huge capacity for 'dots' and dodgy power pills emerged onto our gaming screens.

Pac-Man kick-started the phenomenon of what we now know as videogame characters and from these foundations, a massive multi-million dollar industry has been built. These days though, the best game characters aren't content with simply starring in the best games – they have to have their own films, cartoons and even pop singles.

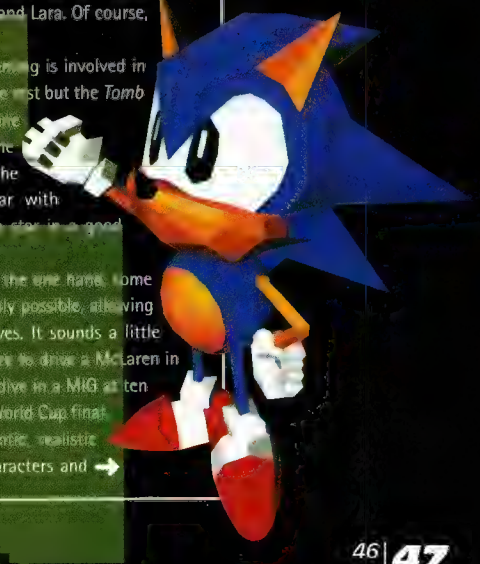
How do they become so popular, though and what gives one character the edge over another? Station explores…

BLUE HEDGEHOGS VS FAT SUPERHUMAN PLUMBERS

There have been literally thousands of game characters since the dawn of videogaming but the most memorable and popular can be counted on the fingers of one hand: Mario, Sonic, Crash and Lara. Of course, that leaves a digit free – space perhaps for Sony's latest character, Spyro The Dragon?

You may or may not have noticed that each of these highly worshipped deities of gaming is involved in some kind of platform malarkey. Okay, so Lara's adventures may be a little different from the rest but the *Tomb Raider* series is still platform based at heart. You may also have noticed that there is only one human-like (well, almost) character in this hand's worth of pixel people: Lara, again. The remaining three protagonists are about as far away from realism as Timothy Leary was at the height of his acid experimentation, which may be why they've become so popular with gameplayers around the world. You see, a character doesn't have to be true to life to star in a good videogame and surely the very idea of gaming is to indulge in a little fantasy.

However, opinions are divided on this and two schools of thought have appeared. On the one hand, some people think that software developers should be making every game as realistic as humanly possible, allowing players to take part in real life situations that would never be possible in their own lives. It sounds a little patronising, I know, but let's face it, we're never going to get the chance to drive a McLaren in the British Grand Prix at Silverstone, experience the G-Force of a spin-dive in a MIG at ten thousand feet or nip the back of the net against Germany in the 1966 World Cup final. However, although there is definitely a place for this type of authentic, realistic gaming, if the trend continues we will see the demise of fantasy characters and →

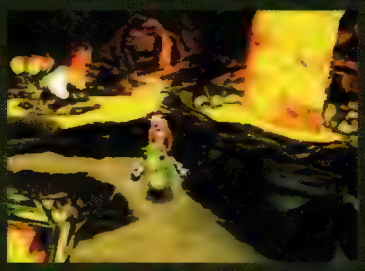


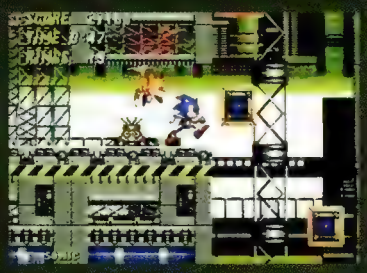
outlandish plots. Take a look at the PC games market over the last few years for evidence of this; nearly every other game is a simulator of some kind.

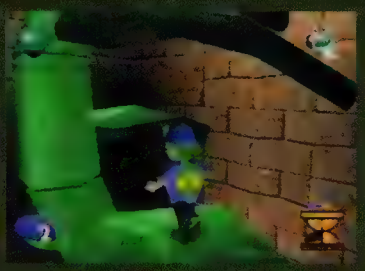
The second school of thought says that we'll soon get bored after '*Virtual F1 2005*' and that gaming is all about a release from everyday life, which is why far-out fantasy characters have always been so popular. I mean, you can't get any further from reality than most character-led platform games. Whether they're played as a pressure valve for life's problems or as pure and simple enjoyment makes no difference, as long as you don't have to worry about how fast you're taking a corner, what your altitude is, or whether you've put enough after-touch on the ball. It's predictable then that even though cries of "realism this, virtual that" will never be muted, fantasy characters will always be a staple diet of videogames and new game characters will continue to try and charm the bucks from your wallet.

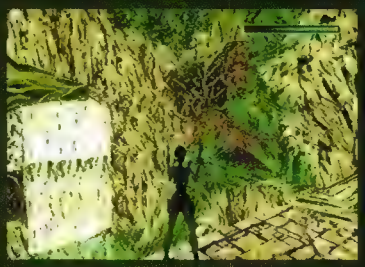
THE B-LIST

Generating a successful fantasy character will always be easier in some respects: less time need be spent on making them move and act in a realistic and believable way. However, simply animating any old character isn't going to be good enough, as the history books will tell you. Software developers are always attempting to provide hungry gamers with the latest and greatest game icons but as you know already, only a minuscule amount ever make it to that all important classic status. We've already seen jumping lions (Brian The Lion), football toting ankle biters (Soccer Kid), gormless trolls (Hugo The Troll) and mechanical rabbits (Jumping Flash) – the list could go on forever. It just shows that to stand out, your character really has to be something special: they have to possess what we call the X-factor. That certain 'je ne sais quoi' that separates a









Oscar Winners

The five top PlayStation characters

LARA CROFT

The be all and end all of PlayStation characters. Never again will a game character be as original and exciting as Core's monumental icon of girl power. Lara is about to star in her own film and she's even got a pop single on the way. Rumours that she is to do a Playboy centre-spread have yet to be confirmed.

CRASH BANDICOOT

This mad marsupial could have gone on to be the next Sonic. Like a movie though, the stars can only make the best of their script and Crash has certainly had a few dodgy ones to work with. Hopefully though, *Crash 3* will put this right – the Crashter only has one more chance.

ABE

He could fart, whistle, burp, speak and he had two bits of chewing gum holding his mouth together. He's the ultimate Anti-Lara statement and he looked like a cross between Kojack and a mutant lizard from a fifties B-movie, but he was still one of the most lovable characters ever to grace a videogame.

GEX

Gex has had a face lift of late and he's even been given a voice-over from the infamous Carry On film star, Leslie Philips, which makes him sound like Terry Thomas on the best Bolivian. A lovable rogue if ever there was one. If the speech wasn't so fragmented, then Gex would surely become a star.

Dead Heat In A Zeppelin Race

The debate on who's the most fanciable character out of Lara Croft and *Pandemonium*'s Nikki still rages on (well, it does here anyway). *Tomb Raider* may be a far better game, but who would you rather play naked Twister with? If they were real, of course...

LARA

Sultry, slinky and rock hard. You'd climb over Pam Anderson to get into her shorts (if she was real).

NIKKI

Slutty, sumptuous and attitude laden. She'd eat you alive in bed (if she was real).

"SOME PEOPLE THINK THAT SOFTWARE DEVELOPERS SHOULD BE MAKING EVERY GAME AS REALISTIC AS HUMANLY POSSIBLE, ALLOWING PLAYERS TO TAKE PART IN REAL LIFE SITUATIONS THAT WOULD NEVER BE POSSIBLE IN THEIR OWN LIVES."

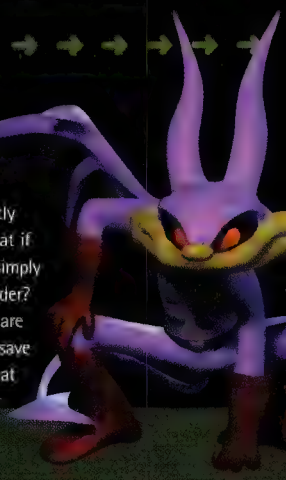
SPYRO THE DRAGON

Cutesy, fun and loving character who somehow manages to keep both the moralists and the hardcore gamers happy. However, he hasn't yet stood the terrible test of time and by this time next year he could either be flying high at the top of this list, or long since dead and forgotten.

Frank Sinatra from a Shane Ritchie, or Lara Croft from Eidos' own Red Lotus.

Both of the last two characters have the usual female attributes that male gamers love but only Lara has made it onto the cover of The Face and into the world of movies. Red Lotus was lacking in a number of departments, namely a good game, marketing and buckets of personality – all three of which go towards making the X-factor what it is.

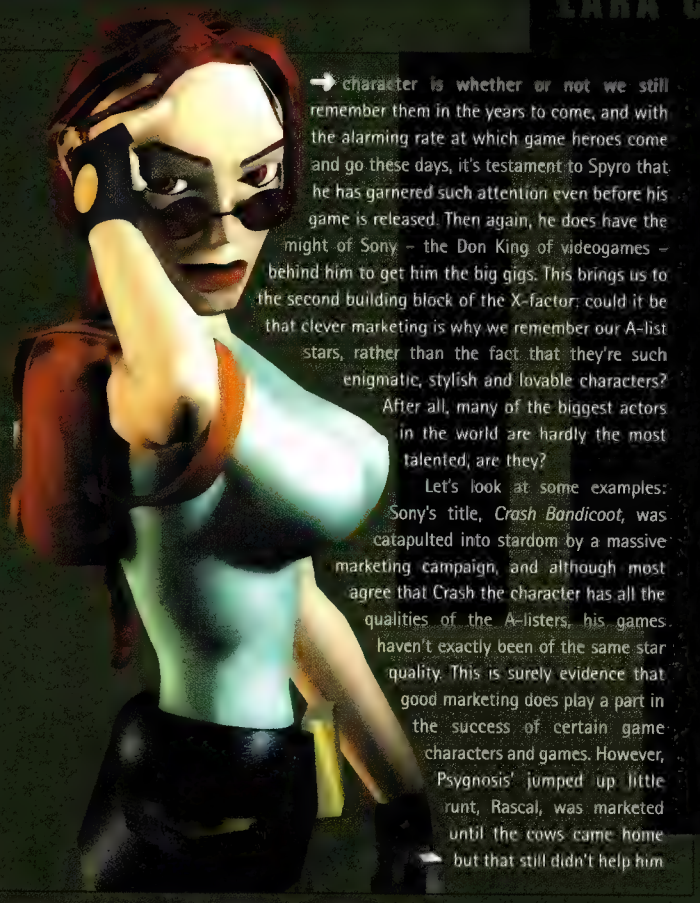
Out of these three elements, can we pinpoint the most essential requirement that catapults a gaming nobody to the dizzy heights of success? Things are never completely cut and dried but just like Hollywood's 'A- and B-lists' of stars, there are plenty of game characters that could have made it, had they been a little more selective with their scripts. The Jersey Devil from Ocean's synonymous Christmas '97 title could have made it onto the videogame stars A-list, but instead of lunching on lobster and caviar with Ms Croft and Mr Hedgehog, he's stood in the queue at MacDonalds with Rascal and the cast of Rise Of The Robots. Why? Was it because he didn't have the personality to make it onto the A-list, or was it that *Jersey Devil*, the game, just wasn't good enough? A star of any nature needs a worthy vehicle to carry them and videogames are really no different. Mario, Lara and Sonic may all be instantly recognisable characters now, but what if the games they appeared in had simply been average, run of the mill fodder? Would they have been the stars they are today? No. Kevin Costner couldn't save Waterworld, and I'd bet my life that *Rascal* wouldn't have been a better game if Lara had starred in it.



THE BIG FIGHT

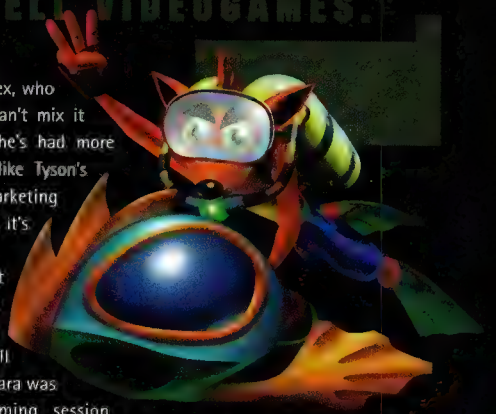
The software development world continues to churn out game characters faster than a Chinese couple on Viagra can churn out kids, but only one new character has stood out as being anything special so far this year – Sony's Spyro the Dragon. Previewed this issue on page 28, Spyro looks set to enter the elusive A-list. However the test of a truly great ➜

"IT'S COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT TOP FILM STARS CAN DRAW PEOPLE TO THE CINEMA, IN THE SAME WAY THAT LARA CROFT CAN SELL VIDEOGAMES."



character is whether or not we still remember them in the years to come, and with the alarming rate at which game heroes come and go these days, it's testament to Spyro that he has garnered such attention even before his game is released. Then again, he does have the might of Sony – the Don King of videogames – behind him to get him the big gigs. This brings us to the second building block of the X-factor: could it be that clever marketing is why we remember our A-list stars, rather than the fact that they're such enigmatic, stylish and lovable characters? After all, many of the biggest actors in the world are hardly the most talented, are they?

Let's look at some examples: Sony's title, *Crash Bandicoot*, was catapulted into stardom by a massive marketing campaign, and although most agree that Crash the character has all the qualities of the A-listers, his games haven't exactly been of the same star quality. This is surely evidence that good marketing does play a part in the success of certain game characters and games. However, Psygnosis' jumped up little runt, Rascal, was marketed until the cows came home but that still didn't help him reach gaming stardom. Even Gex, who is actually a cool character, can't mix it with the best of them and he's had more money spent on him than Mike Tyson's post-clink comeback. So, marketing obviously plays a key role, but it's not the whole picture.

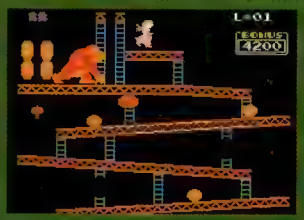


It's common knowledge that top film stars can draw people to the cinema, in the same way that Lara Croft can sell videogames. The difference is, Lara was thought up at a brainstorming session somewhere in the depths of the Core Design building. No casting couch was needed, it just took a little imagination and time. Core realised that in the same way a real life star can make a good film better, a true polygon personality can make a videogame better. Both sides of the coin have to be very polished though, and as much effort needs to go into the game as is put into creating the character, but personality is undoubtedly an important ingredient.

There's a copious amount of videogame characters hanging around on game shop shelves these days and on the face of it nearly all of them could have stood a chance in the dog-eat-dog world of videogame stardom. Some, though, have been given a better start in life: they could have been born with a silver marketing spoon in their mouth, dropped into a superior game or simply avoided the ugly stick from a very young age. Only a tiny amount have had the fortune to receive all of these life boosting bonuses though: the lucky few with the combination that creates that X-factor – the reason why the gaming public can't get enough of them. Although there may only be a handful of truly classic gaming characters, as long as entry to this exclusive club stays exclusive, companies will continue to strive for better characters in their games. Something that, let's face it, we should be glad of.

Back In The Day

There have been more videogame characters this side of 1980 than Gazza's pre-World Cup pie and beer intake. How come then, that only a handful are remembered? Well, with so many games and so many characters all vying for your cash, it becomes impossible to keep track of everything that's worthy of your attention. In fact, this situation mirrors the music scene of late: with so many original bands and bandwagon jumpers all fighting to get their tunes heard, it becomes almost impossible to sort the wheat from the chaff. And even if you can, the wheat soon becomes chaff when the next big thing comes along. There are plenty of enigmatic game characters that – much like that smorgasbord of forgotten music – have just been lost in the mists of time. Here then, is a selection of our fave eighties characters – I wonder what they're doing now?



DONKEY KONG

"Ah," you may say, "a classic character who shouldn't be in the cool-but-forgotten list." Well, he should be when you realise that he never starred in his own game until the Super Nintendo arrived, and hasn't done anything since.

MR DO

Remember this guy? A tiny little sprite with a penchant for cherries. This ten pixel person oozed character and was helped by an overly addictive game. He disappeared with time, but look hard and ye shall find him.

BOMBJACK

Whereas Mr Do liked cherries, Bombjack liked, uh...bombs. As a Captain America-alike, he won the hearts of thousands of kids all those years ago, mainly because of the bright colours and cute music that accompanied him.

PAC-MAN

Perhaps the first real videogame character. Okay, so he had no history or story-line, he didn't have hair or a face and he didn't even speak but for some reason, he oozed more cool than a Zanussi in the Arctic.

THE NEW BOY IN TOWN

Sony's latest platform offering, Spyro The Dragon, is due for release this November, but before it hits the shelves expect a bombardment of Spyro related bumph – for Sony this is the next *Crash*. We spoke to the president of Insomniac Games, Ted Price, and the game's developer, Brian Hastings, for the low-down on the latest platform hopeful, Spyro.

Was it a conscious effort to produce a fantasy/cute character or did you just arrive at Spyro in the character creation progress?

TED – Well, we knew that we wanted a young dragon for a main character, but we definitely weren't going for "cute". Spyro is a mischievous little rascal with a bit of a chip on his shoulder and Charles Zembillas – the same guy who helped design many of the characters in *Crash Bandicoot* – aided us in creating a dragon that was attractive but at the same time, has an attitude. It took Charles about two weeks of design after design to come up with the basic figure that fitted our expectations and then another week or two to nail down the expressions that really define Spyro's personality. At that point, the designs were so good that we never had to touch them again – you'd be amazed at how close the polygonal model is to the original sketches!

There are many platform characters around on the PlayStation – what makes Spyro different from the rest?

BRIAN – He's a dragon! Seriously, the game has a really great "toy factor" and I think most of that comes from Spyro being a dragon. Almost everyone has wished at some point that they could turn into a dragon and fly around and spit fire at everything – Spyro grants that wish. I've seen people of all ages pick up controllers and play Spyro for the first time, and they suddenly get this look in their eyes like "Wow! I've always wanted to do this!" Watching someone get that look while playing your game is probably the high point of a programmer's life.

Did you look at other characters whilst creating Spyro?

TED – It's funny, but when we sat around talking about what Spyro might look like, no one could name another character that they wanted to use as a basis. We started from scratch, especially since we needed a figure that could display a broad range of emotions. At that point there hadn't been any other figures in platform games to which we could point and say "Ah yes, so-and-so does a good job of showing anger or recalcitrance, or whatever". Platform characters generally spend most of their animation frames performing straightforward actions, like fighting or running. We wanted to take a slightly different direction and really bring out the fact that Spyro has a strong personality, so therefore we didn't have any influences from the videogame world.

Is Spyro squarely aimed at kids, or do you think more mature players will appreciate him too?

TED – When we created Spyro, we created a character that we ourselves could enjoy for its aesthetics and its humour. Since the average age at Insomniac is about 27 years old, we certainly weren't thinking about the kids (though many people probably consider us to be kids, just a little bit bigger than the average ten year-old). Even so, we wanted a character that appealed to everyone, not to one specific market. Sony's focus tests have demonstrated that all ages have identified well with and enjoyed Spyro, both as a character and as a game. Because the gameplay is deep as well as addictive, we believe that even if some of the older gameplayers aren't initially attracted to the brighter, more colourful look of the characters and the environment, they'll be sucked in pretty quickly once they start playing.

Do you think a great character can carry a poor game and vice versa?

BRIAN – I can't think of any successful character game that didn't have both a great character and great gameplay. Imagine putting Mario in the worlds of *Bubsy 3D* instead of the ones in *Mario 64* – only the most die-hard Mario fans would have bought it. Or imagine replacing Lara Croft with the character from *Rascal* – even if the *Tomb Raider* gameplay remained unchanged, it wouldn't be nearly as much fun without Lara. For a game to be truly great, you have to nail everything, you can't make any mistakes. The character has to be charismatic and fun to control, the environments have to be exciting, and the main character and the enemies and the worlds all have to fit the same artistic theme, plus you need a really fast game engine. It's been a great experience working on Spyro, because all the pieces really came together. A lot of that comes from team chemistry, and I think the Insomniac team really bonded on this project.

Did you spend a lot of time creating a history and background for Spyro?

TED – Before we went into production, we did spend quite a bit of time coming up with the different dragon families, their characteristics and their environments.

Each of the first five worlds (each of which contains six levels) to which Spyro travels is inhabited by a specific family: either the Artisans, the Peacekeepers, the Magiccrafters, the Beastmakers or the Dreamweavers. Each family has a specific purpose in the dragon universe. For instance, the Peacekeepers are the "police" and their muscular build and heavy, architectural styles exhibit characteristics one would expect for such a family. Likewise, the Magiccrafters – creators of the wizardly implements in the dragon universe – are aloof, stoic creatures, living high in snowy mountains in their alabaster palaces. Each of the eighty dragons that Spyro must rescue is unique in appearance and name, and as the player progresses through the game, he or she can learn more about the dragon worlds by talking to each one of Spyro's rescued dragon friends.

Technically, is Spyro a difficult character to draw or animate? What problems have you encountered?

TED – Spyro was designed with a polygonal character in mind and because of this it was fairly easy for Alain Maindron, our lead animator, to create the model in Alias/Wavefront PowerAnimator and animate it. Thanks to some great programming by Alex and Brian Hastings, Spyro has thousands of frames of animation in the game and because of the interpolation system that they set up, Spyro's transitions between states (like running or flaming or flying) are seamless. Since we were developing new technology, we ran into some challenges at the beginning of the project. For instance, there was no way that we could hold all of Spyro's animations in one file, because of the extreme load time needed to preview the frames. So, Brian decided to create a master file which would hold the base model, its textures and shading, and then link it to individual animation files – one for each move. We ended up using this system for all of the monsters in the game and it saved the artists months and months of frustration.

Which came first, Spyro the character or Spyro the game?

BRIAN – One of our artists, Craig Stitt, had the idea of doing a dragon game. Next Charles Zembillas, the same character designer who created Crash, came up with the look of Spyro. As soon as we'd seen the first sketches for Spyro's look, we got very excited and started coming up with ideas for what he should be able to do. Essentially, the whole game design process has revolved around the character Spyro. We just kept trying to come up with more fun things for him to do, and new worlds to put him in.

Do you think Spyro can make it outside of videogames, in the same vein as Lara or Mario?

BRIAN – I like to think so. Unfortunately, I doubt Vanessa Demouy will volunteer to play the part of Spyro in the motion picture (but we'll be sure to ask, just in case).

The Lara P

GENERAL	PERSONAL
Name: Lara Croft	**Fave Film:** Deliverance
Nationality: Br	**Fave Music:** Classical, U2, Nine Inch Nails and trance!?
D.O.B: 14/02/	**Fave Foods:** Beans on toast.
Birthplace: Surrey.	**Fave Mode of Transport:** Norton Streetfighter motorbike.
Marital	**Hobbies:** Extreme sports and tapestry.
Blood	
Height:	
Weight:	
Vital Statistics: 34B, 24", 35".	
Hair Colour: Brunette.	
Eye Colour: Brown.	
Distinguishing Features: 9mm handgun.	

WAS IT A CONSCIOUS DECISION FROM THE BEGINNING TO USE A WOMAN AS THE MAIN CHARACTER IN TOMB RAIDER?
Lara actually started out as a male character...until her creator realised that a female body would be a) more agile, b) more versatile and c) much more enjoyable to watch than a muscle-bound, stereotypical male. At this stage the marketing angle hadn't even been considered – we were more concerned about developing a character who could make the best of the Tomb Raider environments. There was even initial resistance toward a female character but we soon realised that Lara was the girl for the job.

WOULD TOMB RAIDER HAVE BEEN AS SUCCESSFUL WITHOUT LARA?
Tomb Raider itself was a breakthrough game – so yes, it would have been successful, regardless of Lara. What Lara brought to Tomb Raider was probably equally as sophisticated as the game itself – this was the first game that featured a character that people could relate to, aspire toward and even sympathise with – not to mention ogle at!

When Lara appeared on The Face, people outside the specialist press really began to pay her a lot of attention, to the point where she's become far more of a mainstream icon than simply a gaming character. I don't think Lara would have been taken so seriously by the press if the game wasn't up to scratch! So, it's really an inextricable combination of game and character. Both elements are strong.

DO YOU FEEL LARA'S HISTORY AND LIFESTYLE ARE IMPORTANT TO HER AS A SELLABLE CHARACTER, OR DOES THE GAME DO ALL THE WORK?
Yes, she definitely has to have a history and personality so that people can relate to her. We get asked countless questions about her as a person, like "does she have brothers and sisters" or "what's her favourite food?". In fact, we had so many questions that we've now produced a complete style guide that tells you all about Lara – from her likes and dislikes to her favourite colour. (See previous page for more details).

LARA OFFERS A ROLE MODEL FOR FEMALE GAMEPLAYERS. WAS THIS INTENDED, OR WAS SHE DESIGNED FOR THE LADS?
It wasn't our intention to create a marketable commodity with Lara. The press fell in love with her – she sold herself to them via her adventurous nature.

DID YOU EXPECT LARA TO BECOME THE VIDEOGAMING ICON OF THE LATE NINETIES?
Not just a videogaming icon but hopefully a household name! We've got plenty of plans for pushing Lara further towards the mainstream marketplace. The movie is probably the best vehicle for us to achieve this goal but we do have other plans too. We still want to keep her as a gaming character...with a difference.

HOW HAS LARA CHANGED IN LOOKS AND PERSONALITY FROM THE FIRST GAME?
Well, she's got some new hi-res make up and in Tomb Raider III she'll actually have proper ears. The way she looks within the game hasn't changed a great deal, since we have memory restrictions, but the new lighting effects in TRIII make her look a great deal smoother. Her dimensions, however, have not changed! Obviously we'll have the new outfits – after all, a girl's got to be practical! Her personality will remain constant.

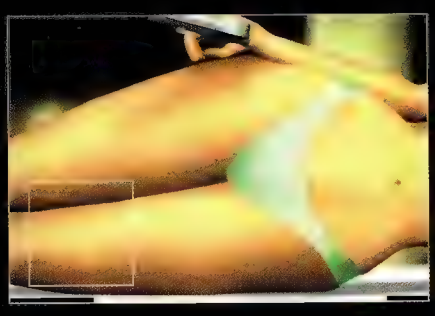
FROM YOUR POINT OF VIEW, WOULD IT HAVE BEEN EASIER TO DESIGN A FANTASY, SONIC TYPE CHARACTER OR A HUMAN CHARACTER?
It probably would have been easier to design a fantasy, non-human character, since this would open the game to all sorts of possibilities. A fantasy character in a fantasy world doesn't impose nearly as many limits as a human character in a realistic world but we've always enjoyed the challenge!

WHO WOULD YOU CAST AS LARA IN THE FORTHCOMING MOVIE?
It's difficult to imagine any of the female actresses filling Lara's boots! Maybe Paramount will choose an unknown actress – I think we'd be happy with that, since it's our priority to make sure Lara remains true to her gaming personality. With a known actress there's a risk of the public forming a preconceived idea about Lara's character before the movie's even out.

FINALLY, WILL WE EVER GET TO SEE LARA IN THE BUFF?
No. Never. Well, not officially anyway.

henomenon...

A woman as the main character in a game? What is the world coming to? We talk to Susie Hamilton of Core Design and ask probing questions like, "Will we ever see Lara in the buff?"



Played and Rated

[56] Tenchu [60] C&C: Retaliation [64] Duke Nukem: Time to kill [66] Mortal Kombat 4 [68] Madden NFL '99 [69] Baby Universe [70] Medievil [72] Wild 9 [74] Wild Arms [76] ISS Pro '98 [78] Victory Boxing 2 [80] SMALL REVIEWS: San Francisco Rush G-Darius S.C.A.R.S Master of Monsters [84] Parasite Eve [IMPORT] [86] Einhänder [IMPORT]

Games, scores and black holes

The final ratings awarded to games in Station are presented as percentages. We have chosen this system for two reasons: it is the industry standard and research has shown it's the preferred method of scoring for both consumers and retailers alike.

90-100%
The word 'superlative' was invented for games in this bracket, which is why anything over 90% is awarded the coveted Station Triple A award.

80-89%
In no way pretenders to the throne, titles falling into this score range will nearly always be worthy of your wedge but may just lack that little bit of polish or mainstream appeal to be essential purchases.

70-79%
A little more development flair may have been needed. Worth considering, but worth being a little cautious of too.

60-69%
Something important is missing but the game still delivers on some fronts.

50-59%
Think long and hard before you take this to the counter. Do you really want a game that has obviously got a gaping flaw?

40-49%
A chasm has formed where there was once a gaping flaw. Things are starting to fall apart.

30-39%
The chasm has mutated into a black hole, which is slowly sucking the rest of the game towards its event horizon.

20-29%
Beyond the event horizon lies the singularity. Gameplay and visual flair cannot exist in these extreme conditions.

10-19%
Only true pioneers (or madmen) should venture past the singularity and into the blackness to buy games in this bracket.

0-9%
You've reached the Pit Of Hades. Avoid, or spend eternity in the abyss at the hands of Lucifer.

Trust the Triple A

The Triple A stamp is our personal guarantee to you that this game means business. We promise that everyone – apart from the most pedantic buffoons – will reap months, if not years of enjoyment from it. The gameplay is unsurpassable, the visuals put Leonardo Da Vinci to shame and the sound has been lovingly caressed by the ghost of Amadeus. Perfection is subjective, therefore a perfect game can never exist, but a Triple A award is as close as it gets.

Talking Pages

Here is a quick guide to what to expect on the pages of Station's Played and Rated section:

SCORE
This is what you're looking for. This is the country's most respected PlayStation magazine score: 100% unofficial, 100% unbiased, 100% honest!

OUT OF 100
87

PLUS/MINUS
Two reasons why you should consider this game, two reasons why you should be wary.

+ In-depth and thoughtful gameplay.
+ Superb Eastern soundtrack.
- The camera comes unstuck at times.
- Some frustrating gameplay elements.

Played and Rated Index

56 **Tenchu**
"Can the ninja blood bath, which has already been causing ripples on import, make it in the UK?"

60 **C&C: Retaliation**
"Retaliation isn't exactly the usual PlayStation fodder, but then most of the best games are a little different."

64 **Duke Nukem: Time To Kill**
"Duke is a foul mouthed action hero, whose entire existence is motivated by the lust to kill."

66 **Mortal Kombat 4**
"Mortal Kombat 4 arrives on the PlayStation amidst groans of 'Oh no, not another one!'"

68 **Madden NFL '99**
"Madden NFL '99 alleviates the age old problem of control in American football games."

69 **Baby Universe**
"Wow, I think I'm lost in the K Hole man. Look at the trippy colours and shapes..."

70 **Medievil**
"His left arm can be torn from its socket and used as a rather powerful club."

72 **Wild 9**
"Wild 9 has the body count of a John Woo movie."

74 **Wild Arms**
"Wild Arms finds itself lost between the traditional and the new style RPG."

76 **ISS Pro '98**
"Having played the original to death, I couldn't wait to jog out onto the pitch with this latest incarnation."

78 **Victory Boxing 2**
"The promise of vast gameplay improvements and a complete graphical overhaul."

80 **Small Reviews**
SAN FRANCISCO RUSH
"How do you fancy going back four years, and paying for the pleasure?"

G-DARIUS
"The shoot-'em-up genre is certainly looking a lot rosier than it has done in the past."

MASTER OF MONSTERS
"Basically an update of the original Mega Drive code."

S.C.A.R.S
"*Mario Kart* style handling and intense arcade racing."

84 **Parasite Eve [IMPORT]**
"Squaresoft's valiant attempt at merging the styles of two of the PlayStation's top titles."

86 **Einhänder [IMPORT]**
"It feels like trying to dodge rain drops in a monsoon, but you won't give up."

TENCHU
We played this when it first appeared on import and were really impressed. Activision have tweaked it for the UK release though and it's now looking even better than the Japanese version did.

C&C: RETALIATION
There really is no better link-up game than *Command & Conquer*. Retaliation ups the ante by adding a plethora of new maps and units and although it isn't a true sequel, it's still one hell of a game.

DUKE NUKEM: TIME TO KILL
Concept: take the 'ardest 'living' videogame hero, stick him into a *Tomb Raider* style 3D environment and let the fireworks commence. The Duke's latest outing still contains the humour of the previous games, but does it have the gameplay?

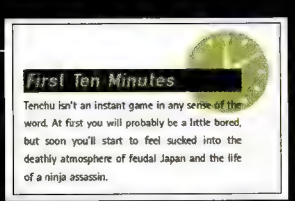
ISS PRO '98
Without a doubt, this is the most playable arcade football game ever. As a new footy season begins, the latest version of this highly successful series signs up for Team PlayStation. You've played our exclusive demo, now read our full review and see what Station's team of experts has to say about the full version.

ICONS
Does the game utilise any peripherals: steering wheel, Dual Shock pad, memory card etc.

The Competition
Tomb Raider
What can I say? If you haven't heard of this, you may just as well stick your head back up your arse.
Metal Gear Solid
Okay so it's not out yet but the stealth aspects are very similar to those of Tenchu.
Bushido Blade
The visuals and settings mirror Tenchu although Bushido Blade's gameplay is much more beat-'em-up oriented.

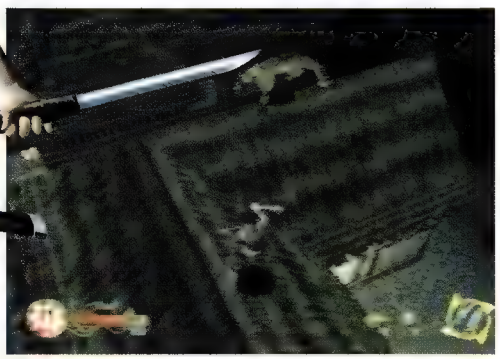
THE COMPETITION
Life is full of choices. Whatever the review score, there may be an alternative to the game in question, and this is where you will find it.

FIRST TEN MINUTES
Do first impressions really count? Is it love at first sight or instant repulsion? Find out here.


First Ten Minutes
Tenchu isn't an instant game in any sense of the word. At first you will probably be a little bored, but soon you'll start to feel sucked into the deathly atmosphere of feudal Japan and the life of a ninja assassin.

TENCHU

Tenchu has finally been picked up for a PAL release but can the ninja blood bath, which has already been causing ripples on import, make it big time in the UK?



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Taking to the rooftops isn't always the safest route, as you may come across an enemy guard; one nice touch is the way that the archers' arrows actually stay attached to you once they've hit.

Slicing throats isn't exactly the staple diet of most PlayStation games, especially when it's done as gratuitously as in the Japanese version of Tenchu. However, this has all changed for the UK release. Before you get on your collective high-horses and start ranting about the BBFC and censorship, get this: instead of slicing throats, we are now treated to full-on gratuitous decapitation! The slicing of heads from shoulders isn't the only way to dispatch a foe in Tenchu, but amongst the plethora of deadly moves you have at your disposal, it is most definitely the messiest.

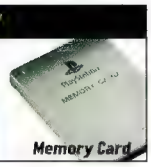
You're probably thinking that Tenchu is a full-on combat game right now, but although it can be very hectic and combat based, it actually requires a thoughtful approach to each level. The buzz-word on many games lately is 'stealth' and whilst we're all waiting for the reportedly fantastic stealthy gameplay of *Metal Gear Solid*, Tenchu has gone and pipped it to the post.

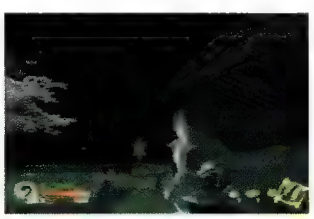
Playing the role of a ninja in feudal Japan means more than simply confronting your enemy head on. In fact, in Tenchu you score far more points for not being detected at all on a level. This calls for silent kills, where close combat sword and Sai skills are essential.

Tenchu

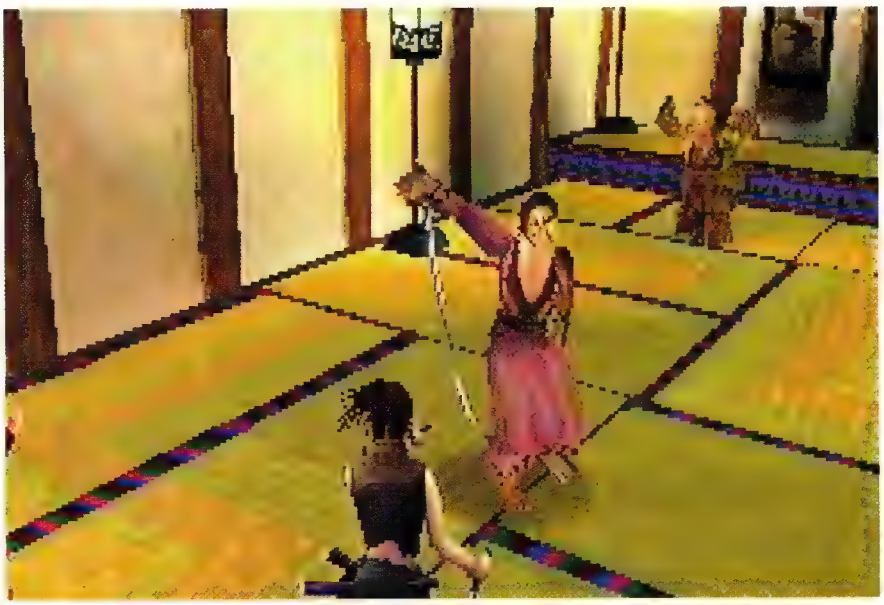
Publisher:	Activision
Developer:	Sony Music Ent. Japan
Release Date:	26th October
Game Type:	Ninja Sim
No of Players:	One
Price:	£39.99

Compatibility





FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: You're treated to a superb death scene every time you bite the bullet; the crouch is a useful way to approach your opponent without alerting them; oh – is that somebody I can kill over there?



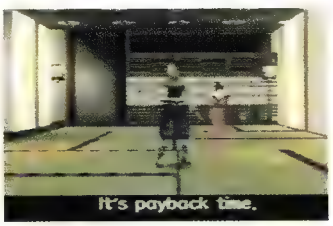
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: I think I've been spotted; it's always a breath of fresh air to be able to kill somebody in such pleasant surroundings; the cut scenes have some extremely dodgy voice acting. But then again, so does nearly every other cut scene on every other game.

Oriental Promise

The story-line to Tenchu isn't exactly gripping; you're simply a ninja assassin working for a good Japanese warlord. As peace is restored to the land many factions still continue to plot against your master, to either overthrow him or rip him off. You, however, have complete faith in him and will follow any orders he gives. This usually involves the assassination of various targets, although sometimes you're required to rescue people or deliver certain items. The missions are varied, although they usually come down to you having to slice somebody up at some point – which doesn't have us complaining too loudly

All of the in-game environments are fully interactive and 3D, which allows you – as either the male or female ninja – to go almost anywhere you like on the level. This usually involves taking to the roof-tops using your trusty grappling hook: a unique long range aiming method can be employed to fire your grapple into almost anything. Once it's connected, a mechanism snaps into operation that winches you speedily to the point where your grapple landed. This tool is perfect for making your way from house to house undetected, just like a prowling tomcat.

Long range aiming, which is simply to do using an easily moveable sight, can also be used to fire off some special weapons, such as hand-grenades or shuriken death stars. You also get to use plenty of other special weapons, which can be chosen at the start of each mission. Items such as smoke bombs, poison rice and land mines can be utilised too, although you can only carry four different types of item at a time.



Stealth Fighter

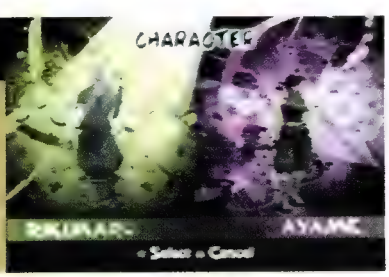
If your cover is blown, or you simply feel like going out for a fight, the general combat is just as messy as the stealth kills but not quite as gruesomely satisfying. There aren't that many moves for you to master, as there is only one attack button, but you still find yourself eating dirt and pumping blood onto the floor more often than you'd like. This is partly due to the fairly advanced enemy AI, which allows them to read a

First Ten Minutes

Tenchu isn't an instant game in any sense of the word. At first you will probably be a little bored, but soon you'll start to feel sucked into the deathly atmosphere of feudal Japan and the life of a ninja assassin.

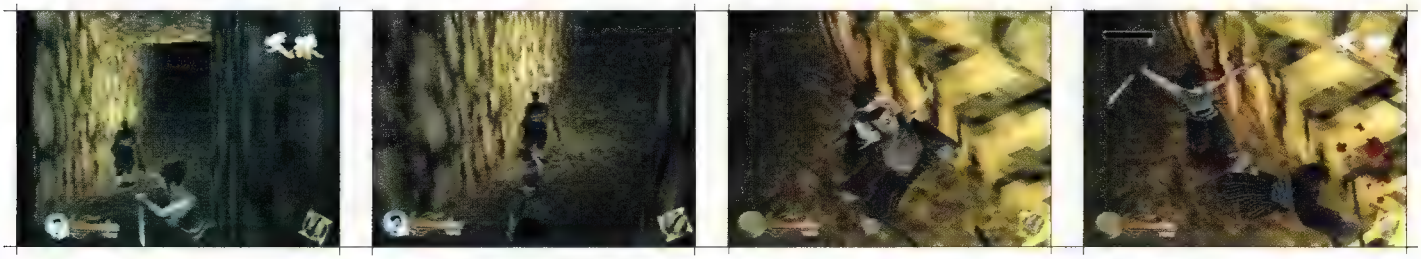
Choose your Ninja

There are two ninjas to play as in Tenchu, each with a different weapon and set of moves. Rikimaru, the male ninja, wears a mask and carries a sword, whereas the female protagonist, Ayame, uses Sai to hurt people whilst wearing a rather slinky short jumpsuit thing. Each ninja has different attacking moves but both, I'm glad to say, can chop heads off with ease.



Killing Time

Every time you manage to off an enemy you are awarded with a gratuitous blood-soaked death scene. The stealth kills are even more over the top – just check out this decapitation scene for proof:



The Competition

Tomb Raider –

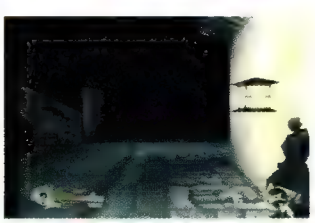
What can I say? If you haven't heard of this, you may just as well stick your head back up your arse.

Metal Gear Solid –

Okay so it's not out yet but the stealth aspects are very similar to those of Tenchu.

Bushido Blade –

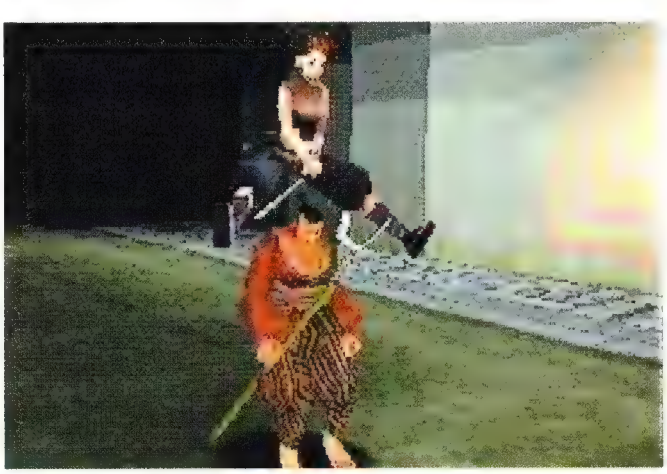
The visuals and settings mirror Tenchu, although *Bushido Blade*'s gameplay is much more beat-'em-up oriented.



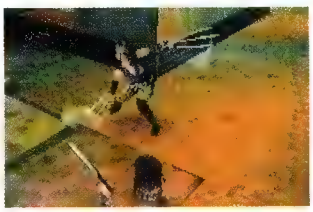
CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: The level map is a new addition for the PAL version of Tenchu; the grappling hook is integral to getting around a level unnoticed; hiding under a bright light isn't exactly a good idea. If you want to live, that is.

situation as it is happening. The enemy are actually quite intelligent at all points of the game, so it pays for you to employ covert manoeuvres. Guards don't simply patrol a certain area that's set out for them, and there are defined patterns of movement, all of which means that you have to think on your feet and react to situations as they occur. For instance, you may be standing on a roof, waiting for a guard to walk by so that you can jump down behind him and put him out of action nice and quietly. However, if something disturbs him before you jump down, you may be spotted and other guards will be alerted. Before you know it you'll be being chased by a hoard of sword wielding maniacs, all out to rip you limb from limb. Having to out-run the enemy is a very common occurrence if you want to survive.

The general soldiers, guards, enemy ninja and samurai around a level are all fairly easy to take out on a one-on-one basis, but when you're being attacked by multiple enemies (which is likely) your life expectancy will drop considerably. Of course, if you don't get spotted, you won't have to worry about this anyway. Not being detected throughout a mission means that you are awarded with more points at the end, which in turn gives you a better ranking. This ranking and mission breakdown gives Tenchu masses of replay value, as you are always trying to better



ABOVE: This unsuspecting guard is about to meet his doom. By the looks of things though, this particular death doesn't look like the worst way to go.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: We reckon that over the top gore is always a plus point in a game, and Tenchu has plenty of it; the camera angle often changes to give you the best view of the fight and the kill; that's not fair, you've got three swords.

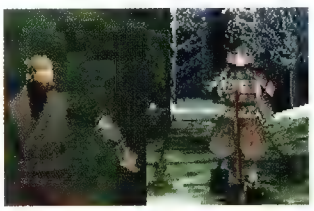
yourself. The extra longevity is needed though, because Tenchu can be completed quite easily, meaning that you get to see all the environments very early on. Don't worry though, the in-depth and addictive gameplay will keep you coming back for more, even when you've seen all of the levels.

Western Promise

Although the combat and stealth modes have all been implemented in a very stylish and playable fashion, it's the atmosphere that's been created that makes Tenchu such an addictive piece of gaming. As you can see from the screenshots, the graphics go some way to making this atmosphere as overwhelming as it is, but it's the music that gives Tenchu its complete, authentic feel. A mixture of Japanese pop and folk music makes up the soundtrack – it doesn't sound very good on paper I know, but when it's accompanying the ninja action on screen it becomes some of the best in-game music I've ever heard.

Rather than simply porting the Japanese version of Tenchu over to PAL, Activision have implemented a number of improvements over the original. For a start, the frame rate has been sorted so that battles with multiple enemies do not slow down. This gives the game a much smoother feel than its Japanese counterpart. Also, the enemy AI has been tweaked, which means the guards are far more aware of their surroundings. The addition of some extra graphical polish was also needed and Activision have obliged by making the game brighter and reducing the clipping and glitching in the camera movement.

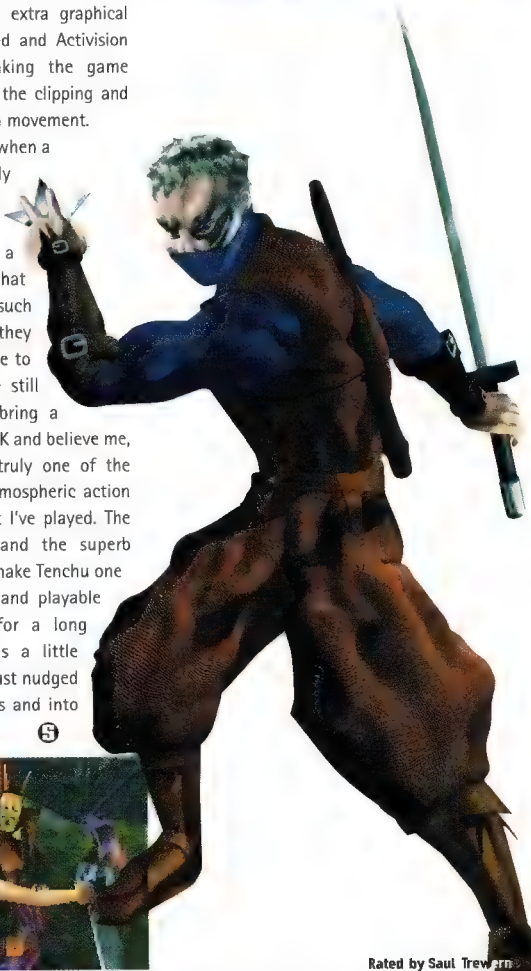
It makes a change when a publisher has actually bothered to alter anything for a PAL conversion and it is a credit to Activision that they have gone to such lengths. Even though they had a belter of a game to start with, they have still made the effort to bring a better version to the UK and believe me, it shows. Tenchu is truly one of the most in-depth and atmospheric action adventure games that I've played. The addictive gameplay and the superb atmosphere all go to make Tenchu one of the most original and playable games we've seen for a long while. If only it was a little longer, I would have just nudged it up into the nineties and into our Triple A award.



ABOVE: The ninja sword can be a deadly weapon but only when you learn how to use it. It can take about ten hits to off a foe unless you use stealth.

Death By...

A ninja may have superb sword and Saï skills but without back-up weapons they'd have no chance against the mass of enemies in Tenchu. Everything from poisoned rice to hand grenades can be used to deal with your foes but the most common and fun weapon to use has to be the classic shuriken throwing star.



Rated by Saul Trewern

STATION

A little short but stealth tactics and full-on combat make a perfect combination.

+ In-depth and thoughtful gameplay.
+ Superb Eastern soundtrack.
- The camera comes unstuck at times.
- Some frustrating gameplay elements.

OUT OF 100

87

COMMAND & CONQUER: RETALIA

The original *Command & Conquer* was a mild success compared to the massive *Red Alert*. We ask, "Can the third instalment in the PlayStation C&C saga live up to the hype?"

War, what is it good for?

Well, in this case about ten hours an evening of some of the most in-depth, engrossing and enjoyable gaming that I've experienced in a long, long time. Well, since *Red Alert* actually. Before I've even got to complete the monstrous two disc *Red Alert*, another two discs of intense *C&C* action have landed on my desk. I'm not complaining though, because Retaliation – without being any different gameplay wise – takes *Red Alert* to the next level by offering the most diverse missions ever seen on a *C&C* game.

However, this will all mean nothing to you if you've never played *Command & Conquer*. If for some strange reason you haven't, or don't actually know what *C&C* is all about, sit back and let me explain...

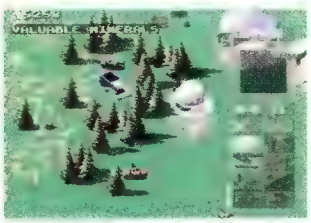
For years, wargaming had been the domain of bespectacled nerds or retired generals, that is until a little known American company called Westwood stunned the world with (gasp) a strategy game that was actually playable. This was *Dune 2000*, the predecessor of *Command & Conquer*, which is the game that took strategy wargaming into the limelight, big time. The PlayStation had to wait a while to get its dose, but it's now become one of the most respected series on the PlayStation.

The general idea is simple, which is why it's become so popular. You take command of an army of troops and vehicles that can be built up to massive proportions by the clever use of building, mining and management techniques. You establish a base at the start of a mission, then mine minerals to gain cash. This cash is used to train troops and manufacture tanks, planes, helicopters, boats and just about any other military device you can

C&C: Retaliation

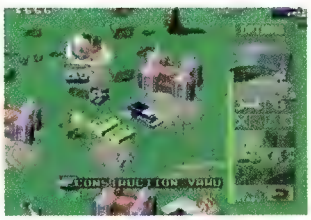
Publisher:	Virgin
Developer:	Westwood
Release Date:	Out Now
Game Type:	Action/Strategy
No of Players:	1-2
Price:	£34.99

Compatibility



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: **Enemy structures are wot you should be blowin' up, like; the mission may be accomplished, the battle may well be won, but the war is another story altogether because Command & Conquer: Retaliation is the toughest C&C game that we've ever come across; a keen eye is needed if you're to keep track of all of your units.**

TION



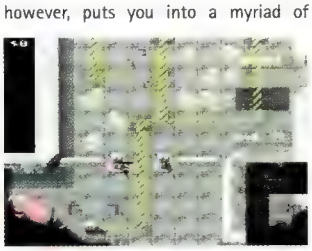
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Devastation has a new name – Retaliation; do you take over the buildings using an Engineer, or blow them up. Hmm, that's a difficult one; a healthy looking base – it probably won't stay this way for long.

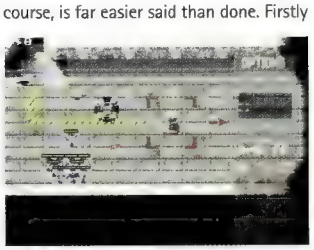
think of. All the time another army (or three) will be doing the same, getting ready for the big push. When the action kicks off, you're thrown into some of the most addictive blasting gameplay ever. It's this blend of management and pure destruction that has given *C&C* its deserved popularity and Retaliation really has taken it to the pinnacle.

For King And Country

The two previous games basically hinged on you building up a base, then going over to lay an assault onto your enemy's base. Every now and then you'd encounter the odd skirmish or twist in the plot but on the whole the missions all had the same basis. Retaliation however, puts you into a myriad of circumstances that pit your wits against some of the most devious level design and AI that I've ever come across.

This is distinctly so, right from the off. The first Allied mission is far tougher than any of the first ten from either *Red Alert* disc. The idea is to stop a supply of nerve gas reaching its destination which, of course, is far easier said than done. Firstly

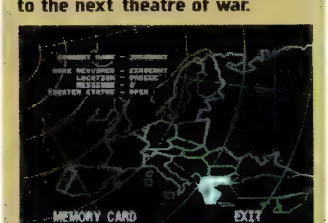




ABOVE: The inside levels take on more of a classic *Cannon Fodder* feel, in that you simply have a squad of troops to worry about. The lack of management aspects makes these levels extremely action-packed, not to mention ridiculously tough.

Map & Compass

Rather than offering you a long line of differing missions, Retaliation requires you to play through different campaigns in different countries. Each country has a varying number of missions, which can be tackled in almost any order. When you complete all of the missions in one country, you get a promotion and access to the next theatre of war.



First Ten Minutes

Jesus! It was never this impenetrable before! Command & Conquer: Retaliation is stupidly hard right from the off but if you know what's good for you, you won't give up. If you do, well you'll be missing a hell of a lot.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Many different tactics can be used to protect your base. Here we've placed a few airfields between the base and coastline. Every time an enemy ship tries to attack the base, they'll always hit the airfields first; the devastating Shock Troops carry portable Tesla Coils with massive destruction potential.

The Competition

Red Alert –

Basically the same game but with a lesser mission structure and fewer units. If you own it already, think hard about buying Retaliation before you take the plunge.

War Craft 2 –

Almost identical gameplay to *C&C*, only this time it's set in a world of elves and ogres. Immensely playable, engrossing and enjoyable.

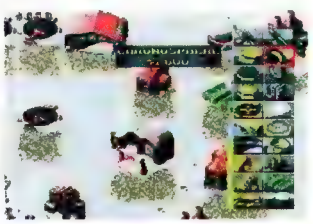
Dark Omen –

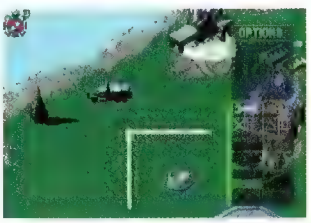
This one's for the real battle sim freaks. It offers a deep and involving strategy, although the action has nothing on that in Retaliation.

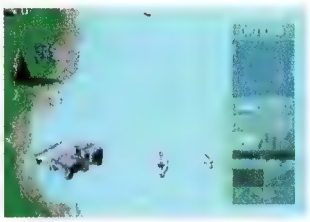
you have to take over the enemy radar. Easy, I thought, just send a spy in. Wrong. German Shepherd guard dogs love the taste of barbecued James Bond. Okay then, send a squad in to take out the defences first. Wrong again – the mighty Tesla Coil weapon is waiting to fry anything detectable that moves by. And so it goes on...for about another six hours before I crack the first mission, actually.

Don't think that it lets up after this, though. In fact Mission One is only the second toughest in the infants. No matter how tough and frustrating each level becomes though, you never feel the urge to dismantle your joypad and perform satanic rituals on it, or simply throw it against a wall. You will, however, have the burning desire to win the battle and see what ridiculously outnumbered mission is in store for you next.

The diversity in the levels is also evident from the early stages in Retaliation. In fact, the first three levels from the Allied disc all require a totally different style of play, but each requires as much thought and concentration as the other. There's even an old *Cannon Fodder* style level in there. Here you have to find your way through an enemy base with just a handful of troops, one spy and a medic, which proves very difficult when you take a look at just what you're up against; flamethrowers, gun emplacements, guard dogs, electric beams (Tesla Coils), tanks, foot soldiers and grenadiers all make an appearance within a few minutes of each other. If you think the odds are stacked against





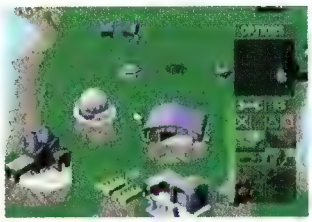


FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Invest in a Chronosphere and you will have the ability to transport vehicles in a kind of teleporter device; the old concrete wall, cool; many battles are fought at sea, which is why you need to concentrate on your navy.

Weapons Grade

The Research and Development teams of both the Allies and the Soviets have been hard at work since *Red Alert*, which has resulted in an influx of new technology to take to war with you. The dreaded Soviet Tesla Coils have now gone mobile, with the advent of the Tesla Tank and the expensive but valuable Shock Troopers. These hard little grunts carry a portable Tesla Coil on their backpacks and can be absolutely devastating if you can get enough into your enemy's base. The MAD Tanks are another Soviet advance in technology that spells almost certain doom for the Allies. Send a MAD Tank into an enemy base, set it to detonate, then run. If you're positioned correctly, the enemy base will become nothing but a burned out shell.

The Allies have a few tricks up their sleeve too, though. The Chrono Tank can warp anywhere on the map, pull of a quick attack and warp straight back out, sometimes unnoticed. The Field Mechanic is also a valuable addition to the Allied forces, as you can send him out into the battle to repair your tanks as the bullets and shells fly. The Allies don't seem to be kitted out quite as well this time around though, which makes a welcome change, frankly.



you here though, just wait until you reach the later levels, where you're forced to take part in some real hara-kiri.

Mad Tanks

The change in mission structure won't sway most *C&C* veterans; all they're waiting for is the new hardware, and although Retaliation doesn't overdo it on this front, it has enough new units to keep anyone who's done more than a few tours of duty happy. New units include the mobile Tesla Coils, the devastating MAD Tanks, matter-shifting Chrono Tanks and even a dynamite filled Suicide Truck. These and other new units all take time to get hold of though, so don't expect to see everything that Retaliation holds in store until you're quite a way into the game.

As much as Retaliation is highly addictive and thoroughly enjoyable in its one player incarnation, it's in the link-up mode that it really excels. Two player Retaliation is what the link-up cable was designed for, and as far as we're concerned, it really is the pinnacle of two player gaming. Nowhere else can you get the same strategy and action mix that pits two players against each other like this. The bonus though, is that as Retaliation comes with two discs anyway, you only have to buy one copy of the game to play it in link-up mode. There really is no excuse, is there?

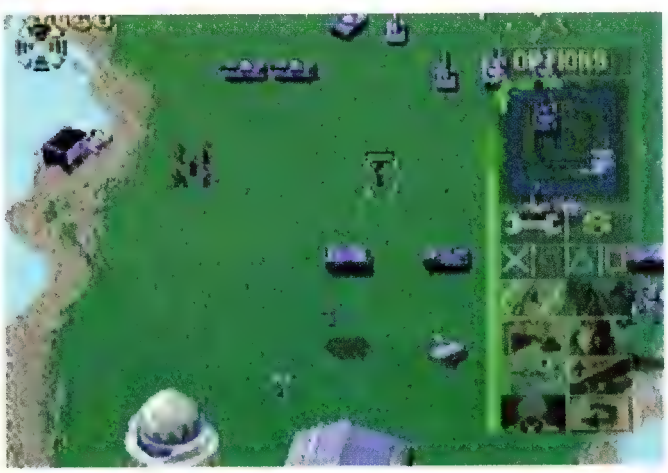
ABOVE: The Tesla Coil in this shot was just waiting for a platoon to come charging in. Check out the craters and scorch marks to see where they died.

If you've never had the pleasure of playing any *C&C* games you're probably looking at the screenshots on this page and wondering how I can be so into it. Yes, the graphics are small and admittedly unimpressive but this really makes no difference to the sheer enjoyment Retaliation offers. In fact, once your eyes get used to the visuals they actually start to work very well, and the fact that they're not true 3D and filled with polygons becomes a positive, not a negative factor.

Retaliation isn't exactly the usual PlayStation fodder, but then most of the best games are a little different – something that Retaliation most definitely is. Alas though, whilst it may be different from other games, its similarities to its predecessor, *Red Alert*, are just far too overwhelming for Retaliation to be labelled a true sequel. Nonetheless, Retaliation is still one of the best games I've played all year. Period.

What we have then, is basically an update of a tried and tested formula, and although the cliché police will have me banged to rights, I say "if it ain't broke, don't fix it." You could flog it a little cheaper though – something that Virgin feel they've done by giving it a £34.99 price tag, whereas I think sub thirty quid is more realistic, especially if you own *Red Alert*. In spite of that though, the new mission structure, amount of missions and maps (there are 105 skirmish mode maps) and new units will keep die-hard *C&C* veterans more than happy.

C&C: Retaliation is most definitely the best of the *C&C* family, so if you're a newcomer this is the place to start. You may find it a little tough but believe me, this is one game that's worth persevering with.

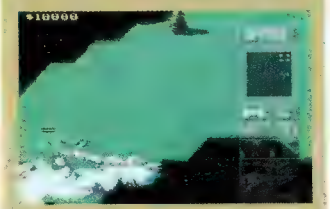


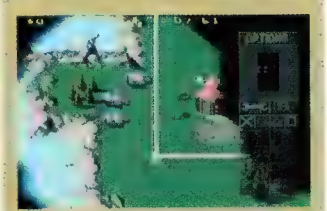
ABOVE: Building your army up is just as important as the way you fight, which is also as important as protecting your base. A fine balance is needed to win.

Fog Of War

Some of you may wonder why many of the screenshots here have got patches of black all over them. Well, this stuff is called "the Fog Of War" and it's there to make Retaliation more realistic to play.

If it were real life, you wouldn't be able to see what the whole battlefield looked like until you'd explored every nook and cranny. The Fog Of War basically offers the same effect: when you start a mission you're surrounded by the Fog and it's only when you begin to explore that it disappears. However, depending on what devices are being utilised by the enemy, the Fog may come back and cause you any amount of trouble. It may look crappy on the page but the Fog Of War makes Retaliation a far better, and more realistic game to play.





Rated by Saul Trewern

STATION

It may be nothing new but it's the best C&C game in the series – simple as that.

\+ One of the most addictive games ever.
\+ Superb two player link-up mode.
– Not different enough from *Red Alert*.
– Still too expensive.

OUT OF 100

92

DUKE NUKEM: TIME TO KILL

Duke is back! The king of the first-person blasters steps out from the shadows, and into the limelight of a fully polygon generated third person adventure: Duke Nukem: Time To Kill. Once more it's time to chew bubble gum and kick arse, and yes – he is all out of gum.

Duke Nukem: Time To Kill

Publisher: GT Interactive

Developer: N-Space

Release Date: Out now

Game Type: 3rd Person Shooter

No of Players: 1-2

Price: £44.99

Compatibility

The deadliest blonde on the block, 3D Realms' first person shoot-'em-up *Duke Nukem*, at first looked destined to follow the same commercial path as its leading counterpart, ID's seminal *Doom*: bridging the gap between PC gaming and console markets and amassing huge receipts along the way. Alas, it was not to be. Although massively entertaining, the timing of the release and the lack of additional PlayStation features forced *Duke Nukem 3D* into a self-limiting niche, his appeal confined to those who had previously spent time in his arse-kicking company. Undeterred, the Duke has returned and, fuelled by the global success of Eidos' legendary *Tomb Raider*, GT have adopted a new approach for the PlayStation's second Duke outing.

Duke Nukem: Time To Kill has obviously been developed with the console audience in mind, with the gameplay involving a blend of puzzle solving, exploration and of course, violence. By maintaining all of the original's darkly comic humour, alongside the same host of familiar characters, developers N-Space have successfully translated all of the elements that fans have come to adore. Once again, the success of the title will be based upon the public's acceptance of Duke, a foul mouthed action hero, whose entire existence is motivated by the lust to kill – clearly a great role model for our youth.

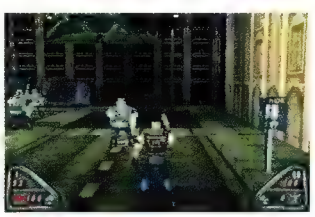
All Hail The Duke

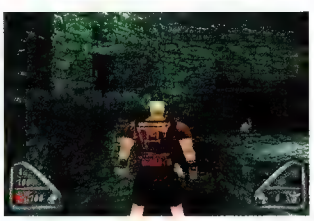
Despite his more antisocial tendencies, it's hard not to find a place in your heart for the gung-ho Dukester. However, his long-term appeal seems to have been desperately overshadowed by the voluptuously proportioned Miss Croft, and the resulting influence of *Tomb Raider* on Duke Nukem: Time To Kill cannot be overlooked. Sadly, this factor takes its toll on both the credibility of the series and most damagingly, on the gameplay itself.

First and foremost, the lead character appears to have adopted all of Lara's trademark moves and abilities. To be honest, give the Duke a bath and an enormous set of breasts and you'd be hard pressed to tell the two apart. Since Duke's moves mirror Miss Croft's so closely, the player will be instantly familiar with the proceedings, but those who've grown tired of the big breasted one's antics will be understandably disappointed. In addition, the innovative level design of *Tomb Raider* has sadly not been successfully emulated here. The early 3D renderings of Duke's home planet, for example, lack the detail of the game's first-person counterpart, which will inspire groans of disapproval from more experienced fans of the series.

Fortunately, the plot allows the Dukester's progress to extend beyond the basic apocalyptic structure of the original, by spanning a number of different time zones, each having its own distinctive look and personality. The medieval areas are

ABOVE: Leaping to a higher platform whilst holding the action button, Duke is able to grasp the edge and drag himself up. Sounds very familiar, does it not?





ABOVE: Duke tries cross-dressing for his adventure through the days of old.

particularly impressive, with underground rivers to negotiate and huge castles to plunder. Bizarrely though, the occupants of these differing time zones fail to change with their environments – barring a small costume change. It's a minor quibble but one that is reflective of an overall lack of new ideas.

A Rush Job?

Most disappointing of all is the underdeveloped split screen mode, an element that should have been given the utmost priority. Our warm memories of link-up *Duke 3D* deathmatchs, stretching into the early hours, were soured by this awfully limited option. Based around specially designed and awfully cramped levels, the split-screen viewpoint allows you to see your opponent's location, which removes any kind of strategy and rapidly forces the proceedings to become very dull. The suitability of using a split-screen approach for games of this nature has to be questioned – surely a link up option could have been incorporated?

The visual quality of Time To Kill remains true to tradition in varying greatly from one level to the next, with full marks awarded to the sheep enriched graphical splendour of the medieval environments. The pedestrian design is enlivened by the inclusion of a huge variety of interactive backgrounds and incidental animations, allowing further delvings into the belly-laugh style of humour that is so associated with Duke. Features like a heavy breathing phone romp with Lara, an encounter with a whip wielding dominatrix and a personal exposé of the sexual habits of the average medieval nobleman clearly point this title firmly in the direction of cult status.

In spite of these touches, Duke Nukem: Time To Kill fails to obtain the same levels of enjoyment that assured the original's PC success, and retro fans seeking to draw comparisons between the two will undoubtedly be disappointed. Yet, as a stand alone product, this is the ideal platform to promote Duke to the PlayStation masses. A game of many highs and a few, insubstantial lows, Time To Kill is perfect for those wanting a more action packed twist upon the plethora of *Tomb Raider* clones that seem to be popping up all over the place. It's just unfortunate that those wanting a little extra will be left, like us, unable to shake off a disheartening feeling of minor disappointment.

Duke The Movie

Time To Kill offers the player a brief insight into the man behind the gun. It's a startling and at times emotional look at the man that is Duke Nukem. Enjoy!

The Competition

Tomb Raider –

Huge puzzle laden adventure, featuring the delightful Lara. Croft. Blessed with a long lifespan and a budget price tag – a worthy addition to anyone's collection.

MDK –

Shiny Entertainment's excellent futuristic romp. The game's innovative gameplay is complimented by its lush visuals, atmospheric sound and non-stop action.

Deathtrap Dungeon –

Ian Livingstone's classic flip-page adventure book, brought to life upon the PlayStation. Enjoyable but fails to live up to expectations.

First Ten Minutes

Initially the game is a little overwhelming, the new control method and perspective being a tad alien to the loyal Duke fan. However, once this is mastered, the trademark Duke magic begins to wash over you, as you once more step into the shoes of the industry's baddest mutha.

Rated by James Gale

STATION	+ Captures the spirit of Duke's previous adventures. + Huge levels and varied difficulties.	OUT OF 100
A slightly disappointing but still enjoyable outing with the Duke.	- Blocky, sparse 3D engine limits graphic appeal. - Poor deathmatch mode is a missed opportunity.	85

MORTAL KOMBAT 4

Amidst groans of "Oh no, not another one!" Mortal Kombat 4 arrives on the PlayStation. After the rather mediocre *MK Trilogy*, many people see this game as a bit of a cash-in. Is this a justified tarring, or should people demist their clouded judgement and approach MK4 with an open mind?

Mortal Kombat 4

Publisher: GT Interactive

Developer: Midway

Release Date: 25th September

Game Type: Beat-'em-up

No of Players: 1-2

Price: £44.99

The Competition

Tekken 3 -

The best all-round beat-'em-up ever. This game is simply without competition on any format, not just the PlayStation.

Street Fighter Alpha 2 -

Still the most fun in single player mode and the vast range of characters adds to the multiplayer replay value. A timeless classic.

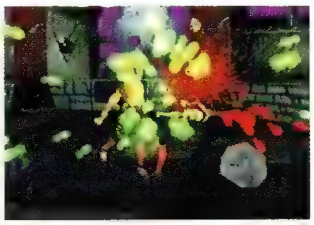
MK Trilogy -

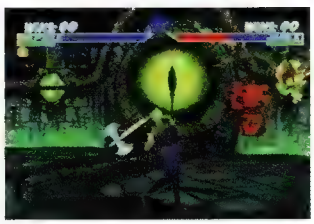
In such superb company, this game almost pales into insignificance. The only saving grace is the sheer number of characters. Too bad they're so samey.

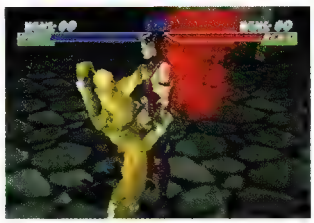
First Ten Minutes

Having been a big fan of the arcade machine, I was eagerly awaiting this conversion and I wasn't too disappointed! The rendered intro is still here and the game speed has been maintained, if not slightly upped. Let's see those fatalities...

Compatibility







BOTTOM LEFT TO RIGHT: Limb breaks can often freeze your opponent for a short time, leaving them vulnerable to combos; Reptile's axe is one of the most potent weapons in the game, as Jarek finds out; Goro's not available in the arcade version but he makes a return on the home consoles. His old moves are still intact, as well as a very painful-sounding limb break.

Oh, that's gotta hurt! The *Mortal Kombat* series has often been criticised for relying way too heavily on its now infamous fatalities. Once you've seen all the death moves, how much longer will you keep playing? Well, where Mortal Kombat 4 is concerned, a lot longer than you'd think, as there is now a much better game underneath.

The intro is identical to the coin-op version but the amazing rendered endings are a welcome bonus compared to their rather lame cabinet counterparts. The actual characters themselves are superbly animated, with the transition from digitised sprites to polygon characters proving quite successful. The gameplay is pretty good too – and it needs to be, going up against *Tekken 3* – and both game speed and playability have been successfully retained from the arcade version. All the characters and moves are present too, along with a couple of extra pugilists that don't even appear in the arcade version.

The Kombat Kontinues

Mortal Kombat 4 is very responsive and the new features work well, after a little practice. The sidestep feature, initiated by tapping run twice, seems like a useless gimmick at first, but a little perseverance reveals some interesting tactics, such as dodging fireballs, running forward and launching a six or seven hit combo. Other new touches include floor objects, such as boulders and skulls, which can be hurled at your foe, an option to hide your cursor as you pick your character, and the inevitable weapons. These make the combat much more interesting, as every character has a different piece of hardware in their armoury, ranging from mallets and scimitars to crossbows and ice lances.

Mortal Kombat 4 is not for everyone. If you like learning combos, multiparts and moves galore, look elsewhere – namely, to *Tekken 3*. If you just want a game to pick up and play with your mates without too much effort, MK4 is for you!

Rated by Arron Taylor

STATION		OUT OF 100
It's not Tekken 3, but Mortal Kombat 4 is definitely more than just another also-ran.	+ Lots of blood, gore and new death moves. + Characters are no longer digitised people. - Extreme lack of special moves. - Just no subtlety or strategy.	79

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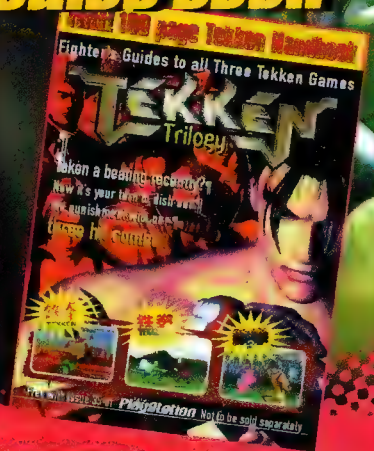


PLUS

Also in this issue: Colony Wars: Vengeance, Spyro the Dragon, Bust-a-Groove, Psybadek, Live Wire, Rat Attack, Monkey Hero, Star Control 3, Dodgem Arena, Master of Monsters

MADDEN NFL '99

In true EA tradition, here's the latest annual *Madden* game. The question is, does the world need another American football game and will Madden NFL '99 be able to convert any non-fans to the sport? Doubtful...

Madden NFL '99

Publisher: **Electronic Arts**

Developer: **EA Sports**

Release Date: **Out Now**

Game Type: **Yankee Football**

No of Players: **1-8**

Price: **£34.99**

The Competition

NFL Gameday -
A bit dated now but offers easy control.

Madden '98 -
More in-depth than *Gameday*, so fans will appreciate it more.

Jona Lomu Rugby -
It's got an oval shaped ball and is far more playable than any American football games.

First Ten Minutes

Sorry? Oh, I must have dosed off. If you're not a fan of the sport you'll wonder why you're actually bothering to sit through this. The controls are confusing and what the hell do all those play diagrams and names mean?

Compatibility

Crunching tackles, torpedo dives and touchdown dancing are three reasons why American football is so popular in the States. In Britain it's a different matter. Why? Because we aren't conditioned for such a fragmented, rule-ridden sport. We haven't the patience to wait two minutes between plays, and we haven't been brought up on the novel-sized rule and play books. American football games still sell in this country though and the *Madden* licence is certainly the biggest in the world.

Madden NFL '99 alleviates the age old problem of control in American football games with the introduction of a new, much easier, one button control method. Of course, veterans of the *Madden* games are able to opt for the classic control system which – after hours of practice – is actually very good. Beginners, though, will see the one button method as a godsend, as it actually allows them to have a decent, if somewhat limited match without too much anorak-style move learning. To pass in one button mode simply hit 'X' and the best receiver will be chosen for you. This means you don't have as much say in what goes on in the game but it does allow you to get into it much faster.

Fourth And Inches

It's not actually until you get rolling that you start to enjoy Madden NFL '99. When the action does start to kick off though, even non-fans of the sport find themselves getting into the all-out combat of the American football pitch. From pin-point accuracy passing to rushing and head smashing, Madden NFL '99 has it all. This, however, is only in offence mode. When it comes down to defence the game becomes slow and tiresome, and at times very uncontrollable. Rather than spinning the camera around to give you the normal behind the team view, you actually play in defence, with your players facing the screen. This perspective doesn't really work and makes the game much harder and more frustrating than it should be.

Graphically, Madden NFL '99 is everything you would expect from an EA Sports game and more, which means fast fluid animation and a general all round polish. EA Sports have also done themselves proud on the game and player stats front, which basically finishes Madden NFL '99 off as a very playable and easy to access title. I still wouldn't buy it though, and I wouldn't recommend non-fans to either. If you're into the sport though, Madden NFL '99 will not disappoint.

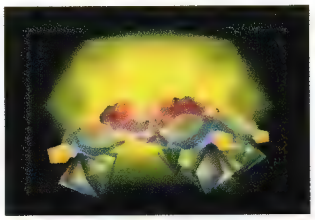
The teams go on strike. No, sorry – it's just the mandatory rest between each and every play that's a fundamental part of the sport.

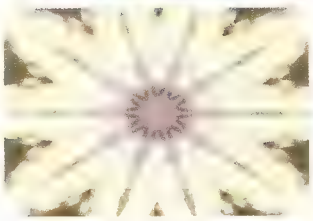
Rated by Saul Trewern

STATION		OUT OF 100
Fragmented, but that's the nature of the sport. Still, fans will appreciate it. Ho-hum.	+ Huge scary players. + Includes all team playbooks. - Will only appeal to fans of the sport itself. - Collision detection is a little dodgy.	70

BABY UNIVERSE

Acid was once referred to as a state of mind and not a drug. Sony, however, seem to think it's a game. Trouble is, it's not that great when you're straight...





CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: The Jewel Case contains different moving shapes to pick and choose from; there are plenty of different morphing backgrounds to feed your brain; a more traditional kaleidoscope can also be found within Baby Universe.

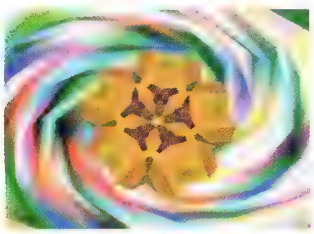
If Sony aren't careful the next shocking truth that our favourite tabloids run about 'the youth in Britain' won't be the facts about ecstasy, ketamine or alcopops. No, it'll be PlayStation games and in particular Baby Universe, which is blatantly aimed at clubbers and trip-heads, designed as it is for that messy post-club experience.

Get in after a hard night out (be it on the dance floor or talking to a tree in a forest somewhere), load Baby Universe up, stick your favourite chill out or gabba CD in the PlayStation (remembering to remove the Baby Universe disc first), then sit back and relax to the multi-coloured morphing stimulus on screen. Your eyes will be treated to a shifting kaleidoscope of colours and patterns, all moving with your favourite music as it either drifts or pumps out of the speakers. If you decided to indulge in fun of the alcoholic kind though, be warned that you're likely to be seeing that kebab and ten pints of Stella in front of you, right before you pass out. If, perchance, you didn't indulge in anything, you'll just fall asleep, because without any kind of decadence Baby Universe doesn't really do a lot.

Far Out Man!

If you're in a state to actually hold the joypad then the images on screen can be controlled, but only to a degree. You get to choose different shapes to play around with in the Jewel Case, and the backgrounds can be altered on the fly. There are four modes to Baby Universe, with each being a variation on the prevailing trippiness theme. All have pretty colours and all are very trance inducing – if you've been on the chemicals that is. Our favourite is the 'Electric Scope', which leaves trails as the objects move around the screen. Whatever mode you settle for, you'll then be treated to an infinite supply of brain pattern soothing/scrambling visuals that have the potential to spin most people out.

As much as Baby Universe is perfect for those post-club situations, it has absolutely no use anywhere else, and it definitely isn't a game. At half the price I'd recommend it wholeheartedly, as a fun and very surreal way to unwind after a night of partying. At this price though, I can't recommend it to anyone.



Baby Universe

Publisher: Sony

Developer: Sony Japan

Release Date: October 2nd

Game Type: Trip Enhancement

No of Players: One

Price: £29.99

The Competition

Fluid

Currently the only real competition for Baby Universe is Sony's own *Fluid*. It's got all the colours, plus a music sequencer – which would you prefer?

First Ten Minutes

After the club: Wow, I think I'm lost in the K Hole man. Look at the trippy colours and shapes. What have I got to do? The joypad isn't working! Look at the colours, maaaan!

In the cold light of day: Yeah...and? So what?

Compatibility

Rated by Saul Trewern

STATION

Aimed squarely at the chemical generation. The price is way over the top.

+ The visuals are very trance inducing.
+ Better than the usual PSX music playing screen.
- Way overpriced.
- Very limited unless you're completely off your face.

OUT OF 100

35

MEDIEVIL

After languishing in development limbo for a worryingly long period, Sony's 3D platform adventure, Medievil, has been unveiled. Has the wait been worthwhile or will the game come packaged with a free sachet of disappointment?

Medievil

Publisher: Sony

Developer: Millennium

Release Date: 31st October

Game Type: Platform Adventure

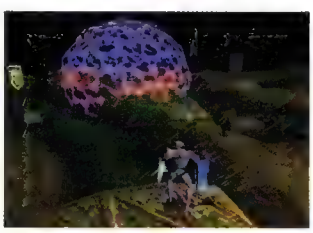
No of Players: One

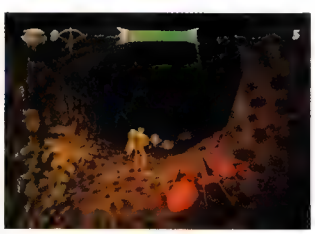
Price: £34.99

An undead dude with a large weapon is the subject of Millennium's Medievil, which has been subject to both release date slippage and numerous false starts. Now, these factors usually serve as an indication of a product plagued with problems and therefore our approach to the finally completed game was, understandably, somewhat tentative. Fortunately all our concerns as to the quality and playability of the title were instantly erased after exposure to the title.

Rejecting the generic cute approach to the platform genre, Medievil fills the screen with a series of increasingly macabre characters to engage and situations to resolve. In a somewhat similar manner to BMG's *Gex 3D*, Medievil reads as a peculiar hybrid of various horror movie staples, most notably the obvious inspiration of Tim Burton's "A Nightmare Before Christmas". Those readers familiar with the horror genre will, of course, delight in these visual touches, yet the uninformed player may be left feeling somewhat overwhelmed at times.

The gameplay and plot also deviate from the usual platform adventure path, removing much of the generic but now waning jump-dependent structure, and favouring larger, open areas instead. Players assume the role of an undead knight and find themselves pitted against an evil sorcerer and his minions, including some wonderfully freakish





FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: They may be very damaging if not avoided, but at least the land mines explode in a huge ball of amazing graphical excess; the second area, the cemetery, is one of the less graphically impressive. No, honestly: do not, repeat, do not antagonise these ants. When these fellas are angry they can do some major damage.

Compatibility

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Medievil's visual style is, at times, rather reminiscent of Psygnosis' *Discworld*, hence the busty wench and the barrels of ale; the atmosphere generated in the forest area is very imposing, something one would not usually associate with a platform romp.

boss characters. However, your task is not to simply launch a head-on attack against your foe but to gradually break down his army, until his forces are depleted to such an extent that a one-on-one confrontation is possible.

Not Such A Nightmare

Each area features a variety of objectives, which increase in complexity and difficulty as the levels progress but thankfully remain logical throughout. For example, an early level finds the spirit of the Phantom of the Opera hopelessly repeating the same piece of music upon his rusty organ. To solve his woes, a sheet of music has to be uncovered and then delivered to his bored finger-tips. The wide range of these objectives is matched by the diversity of Medievil's game environments, with the action moving from basic dungeons to sea-bound romps, each one never failing to impress.

Unlike his platforming predecessors, the lead character, Fortesque, is well versed in combat, both weapon-based and unarmed. To aid his quest a number of increasingly powerful weapons can be obtained by one of two ways. Inquisitive players' curiosity will be rewarded, as the careful exploration of an entire level reveals various new items. However, those seeking some top-end death dealing equipment are advised to adopt the 'kill frenzy' approach to play. Each dispatched foe will release their spirit energy, which is then collected in a mythical chalice in your possession that, when filled, grants access to the 'Hall of Heroes' and its multitude of selectable weapons.

The AI programming of your spirited foes is such that battles are far from easy. Particular attention has been lavished on the six-legged occupants of the ant hill level, which a miniaturised version of our hero has to explore. If left to their own devices, the ants will simply go about the daily duties, yet when one of their number is killed, its mates don't take long to turn rather nasty – a very nice touch indeed.

Pick A Weapon

Unarmed combat in Medievil provides a literal interpretation of the idea: when Fortesque's arsenal has been depleted, his left arm can be torn from its socket and used as a rather powerful club. Being representative of the game's overall atmosphere, the limb tearing sight-gag sits comfortably alongside the dark, imposing settings, colourful vocal characterisation and extremely well conceived creatures.

Visual comparisons can be made between parts of Medievil and certain levels from BMG's lush *Pandemonium*, with bleak locations brought alive by sudden bursts of colour. That said though, Medievil's distinctive look is unparalleled in the platform genre, offering what has to be regarded as a close approximation of an interactive cartoon. Paying testament to this graphical quality, the use of rendered sequences has been limited to a few key points during the game. Essential plot devices are displayed via a number of polygon generated cut scenes which use the basic game engine. The game camera has been employed to enhance the cinematic appeal, highlighting the glorious visuals and intricate level design even further.

Medievil has great potential to succeed within its genre, injecting many new ideas, combined with a lavish graphical experience, whilst almost avoiding falling into cliché. Its many positive elements are blended to concoct a rare commodity in today's software market: a game where visuals do not take precedence over gameplay. All this makes Medievil hard to fault and even harder to put down.

The Competition

Gex 3D –

BMG's wonderful 3D re-invention of the retro 3DO platformer. Classic gameplay combined with stunning visuals.

Pitfall 3D –

Update of the classic Atari platform adventure. The ropy visuals hide a game of much substance.

Tomb Raider –

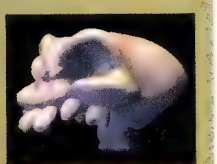
Eidos' now legendary adventure, responsible for introducing the PlayStation to countless breast-freaks, with a little help from Lara Croft.

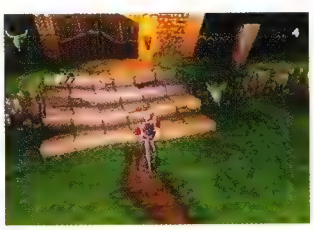
First Ten Minutes

Tim Burton's "Nightmare Before Christmas" meets *Mario 64*. The macabre intro sets the scene nicely, with the first level offering some stunning graphical touches alongside some corny in-jokes. Looks to have much to offer those players whose minds have been marginally warped.

Is Dan The Man?

The platform genre has been plagued by a seemingly never-ending line of wannabe heroes, their lack of appeal mirrored by their lack of originality. The undead lead of Medievil, Sir Dan Fortesque, breaks with tradition, at last offering a thoroughly unpleasant alternative to Mario and his equally tooth grindingly cute kin. Good work, fellas.





Rated by James Gale

STATION

A superb blend of platform and adventure, a delight from start to finish.

\+ The superb graphics increase the atmosphere.
\+ Extremely inventive use of CPU AI.
\- Overly tough end of level bosses.
\- Stylised visuals may alienate the potential audience.

OUT OF 100

89

WILD 9

Wild 9 has the body count of a John Woo movie, backed up by artillery that looks like it's come from an 18 certificate version of Ghostbusters. Could be good...

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: This jet-bike level requires lightning reactions and super-fast thinking to avoid planting yourself in a tree; before you ride this car, smash a grunt onto it to put out the flames, then hitch a free ride.

Murder Death Kill, Shiny's 3D platform/shoot-'em-up from last year, took the genre in a new super-fast 3D direction. Their latest foray into the world of platforms has taken a rather different route though: torture. Not very PC, I know, but it's time somebody came up with a new angle on the platform front and it looks as though Shiny have found the right direction.

The torture is possible through a weapon called The Rig, which allows you – as Wex, the usual reluctant hero – to manipulate energy and create beams, using a gauntlet strapped to your arm. These beams can capture the enemy in a Ghostbusters fashion, allowing you to do as you will with them. This could take the form of shoving them into a grinder, dropping them into a fan, roasting them on an open fire, drowning them, stamping them onto spikes, or even chucking them into clouds of thick black smoke and choking them to death. Each type of death is rewarded with an often amusing, always sick result, which will either have you in the A&E dept having your sides sewn back up, or reaching for the bucket so you don't pepper the floor with spew.

The most spectacular deaths are usually the chopping or grinding orientated ones, where the resultant splashes of green gunk and suggested body parts have to be seen to be believed.

This, however, is only half the fun. The torture part comes from you toying with the enemy before you kill them. Why give someone a quick and easy entrance to the pearly gates when you can tease them agonisingly first? The Rig gives you total control of what you want to do with an adversary once you have caught them, and holding them over a massive spinning fan or pit of spikes just to hear

Take A Freefall

You may well remember *MDK*, where at the beginning of each level you had to skydive through a wall of flak to actually reach the ground. Wild 9 takes this idea one step further, as it has you falling through a tube in a desperate battle against the enemy. You're pitted against a fan wielding bad-guy whose goal is to chop you up or throw you into a wall. To avoid this you have to grab him first and lob him into the sides of the tube. Whilst you're involved in this James Bond style battle, you constantly have to avoid all manner of obstacles, which at this speed proves to be extremely difficult but incredibly addictive.

Wild 9

Publisher: Interplay

Developer: Shiny

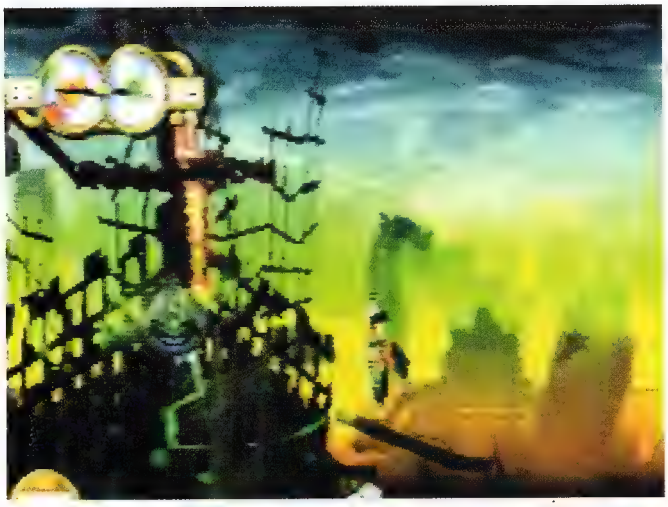
Release Date: Sept '98

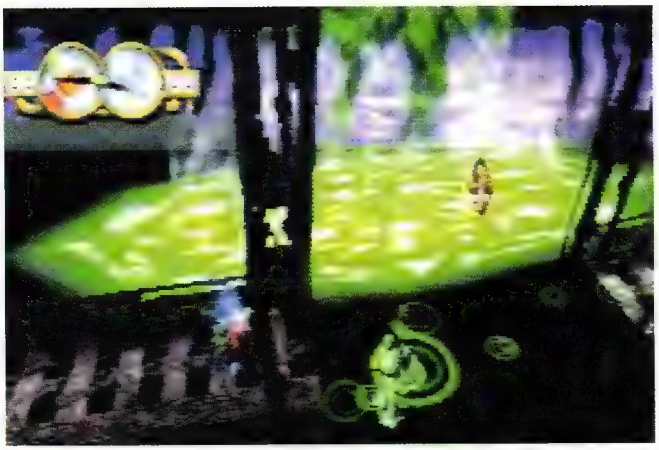
Game Type: Platform Torture

No of Players: One

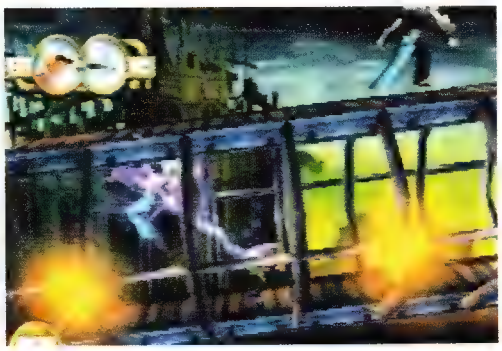
Price: £44.99

Compatibility





ABOVE: **Killing some enemies may help you get past a problem. Here, you should drown him, then use his body as a stepping stone .**



their pathetic screams is satisfaction itself. After a few minutes of playing you're transformed into an animal that delights in the winces, whines and screams of your enemy. We love it.

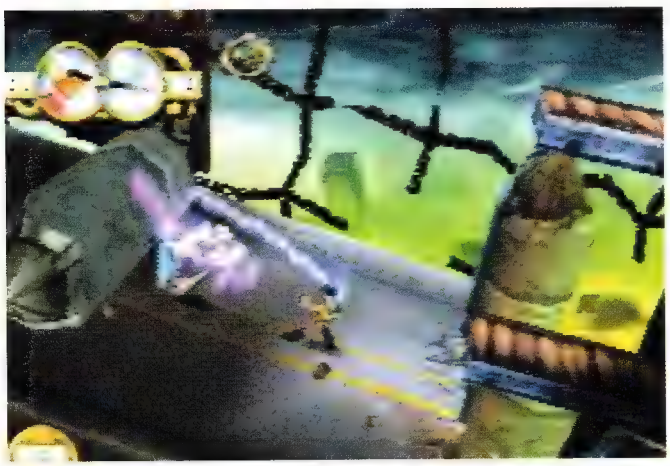
Psycho

However, one weapon, no matter how special it is, will never carry a game, which is why Shiny have made sure that every level is as well drawn, polished and enjoyable to play as possible.

The aim of the game is to save the universe and your friends from the clutches of the evil Karn. This quest takes you through over thirteen absolutely gargantuan levels that all vary a great deal in graphical and gameplay style. Most of the levels are in a pseudo 3D fashion in the 'on-rails' *Pandemonium* style. However, instead of simply going from left to right, your path will twist in all directions, as the incredibly cool camera follows you around without fault. Wild 9 isn't as fast as *Pandemonium* but the extra intricacies in the levels certainly make up for this.

The gameplay doesn't just involve the usual platforming clichés either. On one level, after rescuing a friend called Nitro, you end up carrying him through the rest of the level in order to use his miraculous exploding properties to break down doors. This makes for all kinds of difficulties that take an age to overcome – but without ever getting frustrating. Other levels involve you launching yourself down a vertical tube without a parachute and jet biking through space, swamps and a glacier world.

Wild 9 is a true Shiny game in every aspect: the gameplay is varied and original, the visuals are stunningly solid and engaging and even the soundtrack is notable for its solid hi-fi FX. You could buy any number of decent platform games at the moment, but before you part with any of your hard earned wad, ask yourself this; how many give you the opportunity to torture, maim and simply murder the enemy? One, Wild 9.



ABOVE: **This level rocks from left to right, causing all manner of debris to come your way. You can even use some of it to off your enemy.**

The Competition

Pandemonium –

Very similar to Wild 9 in the way that it uses a pseudo 3D effect but the gameplay tends to stick to the more traditional 'bum drop' style.

Contra –

Could be construed as a full on shoot-'em-up with platform elements. Whatever way you look at it, it's still pants.

Heart of Darkness –

The thinking man's platformer. Shares a similar dark feel with Wild 9 but the games are at opposite poles on the gameplay front.

First Ten Minutes

Torture, I love torture. Where's the nearest sado-masochists club?

Rated by Saul Trewern

STATION

It's original and highly entertaining platform action. We love torture!

\+ The Rig. Torture your enemy, then kill them.
\+ The usual polish from the ever reliable Shiny.
\- Needs more variety in the form of different enemies.
\- Copious amounts of blood, only it's green.

OUT OF 100

84

WILD ARMS

Role playing games have been offered a new lease of life, thanks to the huge success of *Final Fantasy VII*. The marketplace's boosted interest in this once obscure genre has been marked by the release of several new titles, the latest hailing from Sony themselves: the pseudo 3D adventure, Wild Arms.

First Ten Minutes

Text, text and more bleeding text. As first impressions go, things aren't looking too rosy. It's been over ten minutes now and I haven't had to touch the joypad...can I hear warning bells?

The Competition

Breath of Fire III -
Old skool role player that doesn't deviate far from the well-worn path and is all the better for it.

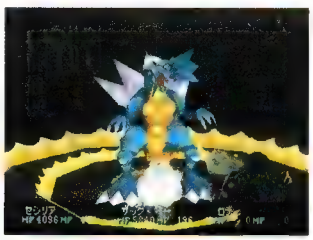
Alundra -
Psygnosis' tribute to the SNES classic, *Zelda*. Not entirely successful but a must for all retro gaming fans.

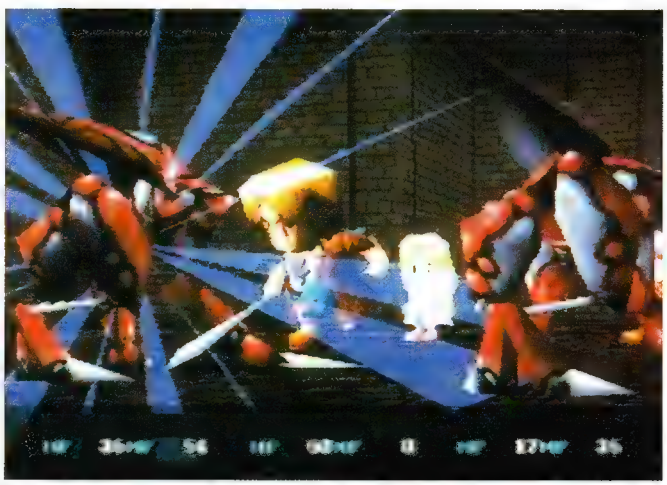
Final Fantasy VII -
More than a game, this is an experience. Reinvention of the role playing genre.

Wild Arms

Publisher: Sony
Developer: SCEI
Release Date: November
Game Type: RPG
No of Players: One
Price: £34.99

Compatibility





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The design of the various enemy creatures encountered is somewhat poor – they're more likely to inspire chuckles than dread; the typically Japanese character design sits uneasily between cute and annoying; the optical effects are also rather unsatisfactory, making the game look dated before its release.

Spawned by the success of Square's benchmark RPG, *Final Fantasy VII*, a variety of traditional adventure games have made their way onto the PlayStation. Recent months have seen the release of Psygnosis' tribute to the SNES romp *Zelda* and Capcom's third instalment of the *Breath of Fire* legacy. These titles, no matter how enjoyable, pale into insignificance when held alongside the mighty *Final Fantasy VII*, yet their retro charm and engrossing plot lines have still won them much favour. Alas, whilst Sony's new title, Wild Arms, boldly attempts to bridge the gap between old and new role playing adventures, it sadly finds itself falling into a kind of videogaming no-man's land.

The majority of the gameplay adopts the basic 2D top-down viewpoint, to trace its characters' progress, but when players are called upon to do battle, the game engine switches to an obviously *FFVII* inspired 3D viewpoint. The developers' attempt to add a next generation favour to the 16-Bit subject matter is commendable but the results are all too often disappointing and frustrating. As mentioned, the battle scenes see the players engaging their polygon foes in a series of real-time, turn-based attacks, à la *Final Fantasy*, but these lack Square's epic fusion of horrific creatures, stunning visual effects and rousing orchestral scores. Instead, what follows is a laughable display of poorly designed creatures and text book lighting effects, which remove much of the excitement from this all-important element of the gameplay.

Ponderous Gameplay

The complex plot follows the adventures of three heroes, who find themselves inexplicably drawn together. Their goal is the defeat of a marauding alien race, which threatens their home planet. Characterisation and depth are superb, giving the player more than the usual brief insight into their on-screen alter egos. Unfortunately far too much time has been spent establishing their motivations and background and far too little on gameplay. The balance between text and action weighs in favour of the former, to such an extent that the player will soon find themselves wandering generic locations and engaging in mindless banter with everyone they encounter, in the search for the next, elusive clue. For the most part, interaction is limited to ponderous and quite pretentious RPG speak, which inspires boredom rather than immersion.

Wild Arms finds itself lost between the traditional and the new style RPG, and its major flaws – lack of action, poor visuals and overly wordy script – are likely to damage its credibility irreparably. Obscurity beckons...

Rated by James Gale

STATION		OUT OF 100
Wild Arms is an uninspiring effort, lacking visual flair and mainstream appeal.	+ Over 50 hours of gameplay. + Nostalgic visuals and sounds add retro appeal. - Lacks balance between plot depth and action. - Extremely irritating music soon wears thin.	64

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ISS PRO '98

The World Cup is little more than an uncomfortable memory but the desire to see English football return to its past glories still remains. Maybe the boys can pick up a few pointers from Konami's ISS Pro '98 – they need all the help they can get...

ISS Pro '98	
Publisher:	Konami
Developer:	In House
Release Date:	18th September
Game Type:	Football Sim
No of Players:	1–4
Price:	£39.99

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: **The goal celebrations are still rather daft, but remain strangely endearing; the far camera is hardly visually impressive but is the most practical of the viewpoints; penalty shoot outs – do we not like that.**

First Ten Minutes

Having played the original to death, I couldn't wait to jog out onto the pitch with this latest incarnation. Sadly, there aren't a whole lot of changes and although the game itself remains as playable as ever, first impressions leave you a little disappointed.

Kill David Beckham! With our shirts proudly emblazoned with Three Lions, an ice cold beer in our hands and a thick layer of nervous anticipation in the air, the Station team took their seats in the local beer emporium to witness our boys giving them Argies a damn good stuffing. Alas, this was not to be. Thanks to a silly sending off, England's World Cup hopes were dashed once again. Oh, the shame!

Thankfully there is a place were an England football fan's dreams can come true, that beautiful place being the business end of a PlayStation joypad. Now, aptly coinciding with the beginning of this year's Premiership season, Konami have released their latest *International Superstar Soccer* update – ISS Pro '98.

As the second ISS title for the PlayStation – and definitely the better of the two, albeit by only a small margin – this '98 addition has successfully removed many of the minor flaws that plagued the original release. The game speed has been significantly increased and the option now exists for players to customise the frame rate to suit their style of play. Re-modelled player animations noticeably increase the fluidity of the sprites and further basic improvements to the coding now allow the player greater freedom of movement when running with the ball. There is also the addition of a new 16 player cup mode, as well as analogue compatibility.

It's Coming Home

To make up for the fact that this is not an officially endorsed FIFA product, fans can now edit all the on-screen player names – something that was always available in its predecessor's N64 counterpart. Those with time on their hands can change all the existing player's monikers to those of their real-life international counterparts. For example, Shealler is transformed to Shearer, Adems to Adams and Backham becomes...well, I guess that depends on who you support.

The gameplay itself is, once again, flawless, although it has to be said that the multiplayer match option is where the action really comes into its own. The scope for both defensive and offensive attacks is nearly limitless, with the advanced AI of the CPU opponents ensuring an exciting battle of studs and leather every time the whistle blows.

Our praise for ISS Pro '98 is of the highest level but when it's held in comparison with the previous instalment – which is currently available at budget price – you have to ask whether a few minor enhancements are enough to warrant parting with more cash. A superb game, yet one that's hard to recommend.

Rated by James Gale

STATION		OUT OF 100
More of the same from ISS. Needed some big signings to challenge for FIFA's title.	+ Improved visuals and game speed. + Noticeable changes to the option screens. - Doesn't differ enough from the original. - Change the dreadful music and sonics!	83

The Competition

ISS Pro –
A little lacking on the options screen but a solid reproduction of the beautiful game, now made even more attractive by its budget price tag.

Three Lions –
Impressive romp, aimed directly at the simulation end of the market. Notable for its touches of originality.

World Cup '98 –
The current holder of the PlayStation Premier League title, EA Sport's fantastic reworking of their legendary *FIFA* series.

Compatibility

WILD
9

VICTORY BOX

Victory Boxing 2

Publisher: JVC

Developer: Victor

Release Date: October

Game Type: Boxing Simulation

No of Players: 1-2

Price: £39.99

Compatibility

Sticky Vicky

To help promote Victory Boxing 2, JVC have employed the many talents, er, well...two talents of Page 3 model, Vicky Lee. For the purpose of the more 'artistically minded' reader we have included some of this promotional material. Please note the perfect composition of light and shadow and of course, her massive breasts.

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: At various points during the game, the player will be returned to the gym to learn a new offensive from this hardened trainer; each replay can be edited by the player to focus on any action that may have been missed.

A damn good fisting, dished out by two highly trained athletes, seems capable of capturing the attention of sports fans the whole world over. Yes, the sport of boxing – love it or hate it – has remained consistently popular for over a century. The basic instincts of the human being seem gratified by the spectacle of two large blokes knocking the living daylights out of one another. Although most won't admit their almost morbid fascination with the sport, the weight of the purses these pugilists battle for and the receipts generated give an indication of the immensity of this sport's worldwide popularity.

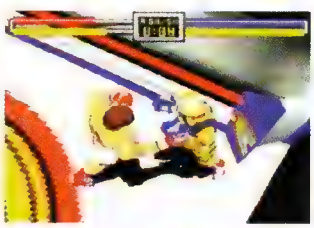
Bizarrely then, when one scans the shelves of any games store, the success of the sport is certainly not reflected in the volume of boxing titles available to the console owner. The only title currently available is JVC's comprehensive *Victory Boxing*. An enjoyable reproduction of the sport, albeit one which lacks an official license, *Victory Boxing* was graced with a complex fighting engine and a wealth of modes that catered for all but the most loyal of boxing fans.

It's not surprising then, that the announcement of this sequel brought a smile to the bruised visages of the PlayStation boxing fraternity. The promise of both some vast gameplay improvements and a complete graphical overhaul soon had even the most cynical of pixel punchers threatening to make a comeback.

Rocky Road

Unfortunately, after the initial bout disappointment rapidly sets in. An instant flaw thrown up by Victory Boxing 2 – possibly created by an attempt to address complaints surrounding the difficulty of the first game – is the learning curve, or lack of it. On the default difficulty setting, during both the Tournament and Road to World Title options, the first few opponents can be defeated by a series of dull, upper body blows – no other tactics are necessary. A sudden increase in the CPU's skill then necessitates the use of blocking but the offensive patterns of the opponents are simplistic and extremely easy to mimic, assuring you a quick victory.

Only the toughest settings contain something close to a challenge but even



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: When blocking, the pugilist's energy level rises, although a barrage of punches is still being thrown...odd; the top-down camera is actually rather practical; a slightly amusing camera zoom from the replay edit.

VB 2

JVC's *Victory Boxing*, the current holder of the PSX heavyweight title, defends its crown in tonight's main event. The challenger is its younger, fresh-faced brother, Victory Boxing 2. Let's get ready to rumble...

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: During the main Championship, wins and losses are displayed via a magazine spread; endorsed by Boxing News, various facts punctuate the loading times; the first-person view allows you to quite literally put 'em up.

at this level the opponents rarely break from their established routines. With only two single player modes, lone boxers will be soon left clutching the world title, with 38 fighters bleeding in their wake and little left to hold their interest.

The removal of the original's pseudo management mode also has a terminal influence on the lifespan of the game. The ability to create and train a fully customised fighter ensured many a return to the original; creating Frankenstein style boxers was a major selling point of the game. Without this option, Victory Boxing 2 seems two-dimensional in comparison to its older and increasingly superior predecessor. In its place the new fighters will receive experience points for each win, therefore improving their abilities with time. However, this is a poor substitute that robs the gameplay of an essential interactive element.

In The Red Corner

The saving graces of the title are its visuals and the very enjoyable two player game. The graphical quality has greatly increased the original. Sadly some glitching does still occur, but both the design of the fighters and the inclusion of real-time damage on the fighters' faces is excellent. The comic book characters mimic various big name fighters without stepping into lawsuit country, and two members of the Station editorial team are also included in the rankings. Just picture the scene: in the blue corner, Dave "The Animal" Perry and his opponent James "The Hurricane" Gale – rather a nice touch, if I do say so myself.

The feeling of weight carried by these characters adds to the enjoyment of the game. A well placed blow sends the opponent reeling, to the accompaniment of a satisfying hollow thump, as lips split and eyes bruise, combining to send the player's aggression ratings to dangerous levels.

As with its beat-'em-up cousins, the two player option is by far the most successful and entertaining of game modes. However, whilst the first person viewpoint makes for some intense displays of boxing, the overall lack of moves won't promote this title above the ranks of *Tekken* and its counterparts.

Victory Boxing 2 can only be viewed as a disappointment. Even the two player option only just raises its head above water. Fans of the sport may be better waiting until the release of EA Sport's pending *Knockout Kings* before donning their gloves and entering this ring.

ABOVE: The yellow bar on screen measures the fighter's strength after being floored. *Track and Field* style thrashing soon has them back on their toes.

The Competition

Victory Boxing –

The original and still the premiere boxing title available for PlayStation. Surprisingly complex with much depth. The management option alone makes it worth the price tag.

Knockout Kings –

Officially endorsed simulation from EA Sports. Featuring a wealth of big name fighters and a variety of modes, not yet released at the time of press but showing great potential.

K1 – Arena Fighters –

A bland kick boxing simulation, very similar to the original *Victory Boxing* in its gameplay and general design. Sadly ignored at release due to lack of depth.

First Ten Minutes

Having found the original *Victory Boxing* a little daunting in the difficulty stakes, I was relieved to discover that the complexity of the game mechanics and control had dropped. However, could this possibly have a damaging effect overall on the lifespan of the game?

Rated by James Gale

STATION

A far more arcade friendly boxing romp that sadly misses the strengths of the original.

+ Pugilists have a great sense of weight and impact.
+ The arcade styling is perfect for the inexperienced.
- Where have all the original options gone?
- Terrible polygon glitching during replays

OUT OF 100

72

SAN FRANCISCO RUSH

San Francisco Rush

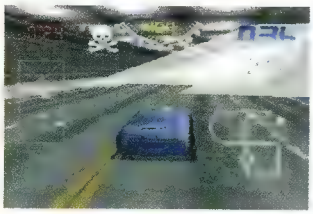
Publisher: GT Interactive

Developer: Williams

Release Date: Out Now

Price: £39.99

San Francisco Rush wasn't exactly what you'd call an arcade classic but undeterred by its lacklustre arcade performance, Williams and GT are bringing it to the PlayStation. Why, oh why?



How do you fancy going back four years and paying for the pleasure? If you do, get down to the game shop and buy a copy of San Francisco Rush. On arrival at home place the disc into your PlayStation, turn it on and you will be treated to a dated looking, incredibly tedious and barely playable racing game that should have stayed in the arcades, where nobody liked it anyway.

Why companies release such obviously below standard racing fare is beyond me. I mean, we have the likes of *GT*, *TOCA* and *Colin McRae* all vying for your racing game cash, so who in their right mind would splash out on this? The screenshots don't fully reproduce the ropy graphics – you need to see it moving for that. Unfortunately I can't give you the whole story on San Francisco Rush's gameplay, as I'm just about to run out of space. Just heed my words: don't, I repeat, do not buy this game for any reason other than to burn it.

Rated by Saul Trewern

STATION		OUT OF 100
The epitome of everything that's bad about gaming. Why bother?	+ Yeah right. + I don't think so. - Everything!	20

G-DARIUS

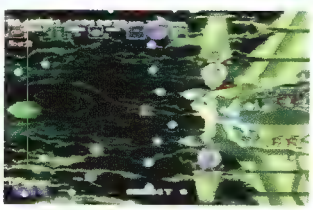
G-Darius arrives, hot on the heels of the import release of *Einhänder*, but can it outshine the polish of Square's blasting masterpiece?

The shoot-'em-up genre is certainly looking a lot rosier than it has done in the past, with the release of G-Darius, and *Einhänder* out on import. G-Darius is the one that all of you destruction fiends will be able to get your hands on first though (at least in PAL form), and although it's not quite up to the graphical flare of Square's consummate blaster, it certainly gives it a good run for its money in the gameplay stakes.

Taito's experience in the shoot-'em-up genre is extremely provident in this, their five hundred and sixtieth shoot-'em-up (or thereabouts). The action is as fast paced as you would expect from a Japanese blaster and at times the amount of flack you have to avoid just to keep your hide intact is incredible. Fortunately you have access to a ridiculous amount of varied hardware that ranges from lasers to bombs and missiles.

G-Darius' unique feature is the use of capture balls that enable your ship to collect enemy ships and use them for your own purposes. This opens the gameplay up, allowing you to find all kinds of weird and wonderful hardware. Couple this with G-Darius' blinding speed, immense challenge and varied level design, and together it makes one of the best blasters we've seen in a while.

Rated by Saul Trewern



STATION		OUT OF 100
Graphically very dated but the gameplay is definitely up there with the best of them.	+ Top shoot-'em-up action. + Innovative special weapons system. - Dated graphics. - Hardly original.	84

G-Darius

Publisher: THQ

Developer: Taito

Release Date: Out Now

Price: £34.99

S.C.A.R.S.

Mario Kart style gameplay comes crashing onto the PlayStation in a futuristic weapon filled race-and-blastathon.

S.C.A.R.S.

Publisher: Ubi Soft

Developer: Vivid Image

Release Date: Out Now

Price: £39.99

S.C.A.R.S., or to give it its full title, Super Computer Animal Racing Simulation, offers players another chance of playing a pseudo *Mario Kart* style game on the PlayStation. Surprisingly, it's actually pretty cool, as although it may not contain hundreds of cars to choose from, realistic car handling physics, or even plenty of tracks, it does contain a smidgen of that special item: gameplay.

On your first play though, this gameplay doesn't shine through and you're almost tempted to stop after your first race. However, a few races later and the *Mario Kart* style handling and intense arcade racing starts to rear its actually quite pretty head. The visuals have been drawn to the highest quality and the animal based cars are some of the most outlandish we've seen in some time.

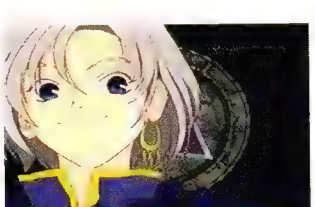
S.C.A.R.S. will never reach the top of the charts but if you're bored of the latest batch of 'super-turbo-triple-A' releases, S.C.A.R.S. does offer a good few hours of play. As for shelling out full whack for it though, I'd be wary that it might not last for too long. Rent it first, and if you find that you're still being harangued by the mildly addictive gameplay, go out and buy it.

Rated by Saul Trewern

STATION	+ Fun *Mario Kart* style gameplay. + Looks good and runs at a decent speed.	OUT OF 100
You could do far worse than S.C.A.R.S., but then again, you could do far better.	- Some of the weapons are plain boring. - Handling can be frustrating at times.	70

MASTER OF MONSTERS

Ascii's long delayed PAL conversion of the classic Mega Drive turn-based wargame has surfaced, but will PlayStation owners enjoy this decidedly retro experience?



Master of Monsters

Publisher: ASCII Entertainment

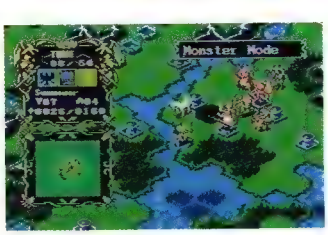
Developer: ASCII

Release Date: Out Now

Price: £39.99

With *Final Fantasy Tactics* apparently lost in limbo forever, ASCII's Master of Monsters provides the fantasy real-time combat fan a much needed burst of dragon slaying and such like.

As it's basically an update of the original Mega Drive code, the visuals and sonic effects are less than inspiring – the only true indication of the title's 32-bit origins are the manga FMV sequences. The success of this game is based upon its gameplay, as opposed to aesthetic prowess – a limiting but brave move by the developers.



Fans of the original will be delighted to learn that the immersive blend of strategy and combat remains intact. The player assumes the role of a lone warrior, graced with the magical power to resurrect an army of loyal creatures – hence the title. The combat system reproduces a basic hex based structure, as well as incorporating elements from the RPG genre, creating much for fans to lose themselves in. The inclusion of a two player mode increases its lifespan still further.

Master of Monsters is certainly not for all tastes but any fans of the genre will love it.

Rated by James Gale

STATION	+ Will last forever. + Perfect conversion of the Mega Drive classic.	OUT OF 100
A little outdated but remains an enjoyable little fantasy romp.	- Perfect conversion of the Mega Drive classic. - A little obscure for some tastes.	81

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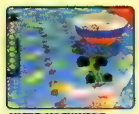

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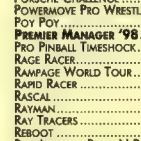

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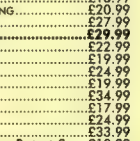

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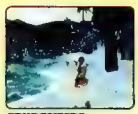

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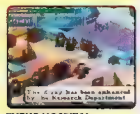

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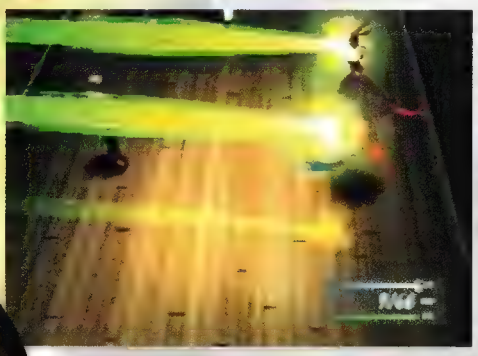
PARASITE

A human ball of flames collapses to the floor, as the opening scene from Parasite Eve erupts in a fire-filled frenzy. What started out as a subdued evening at the opera for New York cop, Aya Brea, has turned into her biggest waking nightmare. All around her, people are combusting as she looks on helplessly, and on stage a lone figure stands before this madness... Who is this lone figure? Eve...

And so begins Parasite Eve, Squaresoft's valiant attempt at merging the styles of two of the PlayStation's top titles. Capcom's survival horror from *Resident Evil* and Square's own epic, *Final Fantasy VII* have both been pilfered in an attempt to provide an intriguing blend of RPG and *Resident Evil* style atmosphere and visuals but – and I'm afraid it's a Trump Tower sized but – Square haven't managed to pull it off in their usual inimitable style.

On first look though, Parasite Eve is a striking yet subtle gem of a game, and only after sustained play do you get to experience the boredom generated by some of the slower, more monotonous parts of the game – of which, unfortunately, there are too many. The blazing inferno antics at the beginning fool you into thinking that you're about to experience a frantic, full-on roller coaster of a ride through the streets of New York. After the initial rush of excitement though, the game soon sets into go-slow mode and you find that the mix of admittedly superbly rendered and light sourced graphics and RPG style gameplay doesn't hold the same flair as either of the title's two major influences.



ABOVE: Unlike *FFVII* you're actually able to dodge the incoming fire on Parasite Eve. Thank God.

Parasite Eve

Publisher: Square

Developer: Square

Release Date: Out Now (import)

Game Type: Cinematic RPG

No of Players: One

Price: £60 approx

EVE

The eagerly awaited Parasite Eve has finally hit American shores, giving us the first chance to play it in the lingo we speak.

ABOVE: Aya gives an interview after the opera tragedy and is insulted. So, in good old fashioned cop film style, the interviewer gets a slap from her partner.

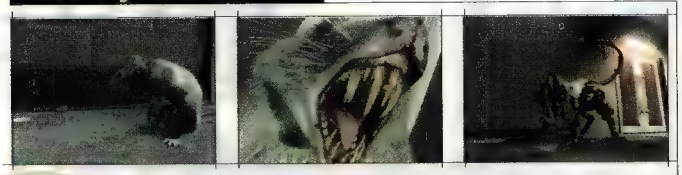
ABOVE: Another example of Square's attention to graphical detail. Check out the superb lighting and the crystal clear reflection in the mirror on the wall.

What Happens Next?

However, Square have managed to keep their tradition of writing superfluous videogame story lines and although Parasite Eve is typically long winded, you still feel as though you have to find out what happens next, and why. Aya, the game's main character, is the sole survivor of the opera incident and before long she and her partner are drawn into a mystery of potentially catastrophic proportions. Mitochondria – the energy living inside all of us – has decided that it wants out, and the mysterious Eve (former opera singer gone barking) can control it. This destructive force lives to either destroy or multiply, which makes for some superb cut scenes involving a plethora of mutant animals and one highly psychotic opera singer.

The cut scenes hold the story line together but the main action takes the form of a *Resident Evil* style walkabout. When you come across one of the hundreds of hideous enemies though, the game goes into turn-based RPG mode. Square have decided to make things a little different from the tired, 'strike and wait' RPG battle system though, so here you have the opportunity to run around your enemy and avoid their physical and magical attacks. When attacking, a green grid will appear to allow you to range your attack, then it's time to decide whether you want to use a weapon (of which there are many) or your 'Parasite Energy'.

You Dirty Rat...



Parasite Eve may be ever so slightly lacking in the playability department but if we had a separate score for graphics, it would be getting top marks. But then we don't, so it won't. Anyway, Square are famous for their amazing Silicon Graphics style cut scenes, which they haven't skimped on for Parasite Eve. In fact, the game contains some of the best cut scenes we've had the pleasure of witnessing, especially this one, where a perfectly happy rat seems to have got out of bed on the wrong side.

Big Gamble

Parasite Energy, or 'PE', is much the same as the magic in *FFVII* and works in a similar fashion. Experience points won in a battle help to take Aya to the next level of 'PE' (experience) where she will gain a wider variety of 'spells' to use in either attack or defence. How and why Aya has magical abilities isn't found out until later in the game, but on the whole, learning and casting spells does add a much needed boost to the original but ultimately samey battle segments.

The interbreeding of two different genres to spawn Parasite Eve has been a big gamble from the start. If any other developer had been at the controls, I'm sure that we wouldn't have half the product that we have here. As it stands, Parasite Eve is a fantastic looking and intriguing blend of action, strategy and RPG elements. However, in plundering two of the world's peerless games, Square have forgotten to add the flair and pure playability that adorns every other game they've produced. If Square bear this in mind though, I'll be first in the queue for *Parasite Eve 2*.

First Ten Minutes

People burning, rats mutating and supernatural beings. This is gonna' be good.

The Competition

Resident Evil 2 –
One of the best selling games on the PlayStation and with thrills-a-plenty, it continues to soil Y-fronts the world over.

Final Fantasy VII –
The deepest, most playable and intriguing RPG ever. Nuff said.

Compatibility

Rated by Saul Trewern

STATION

Takes the best ideas of RE2 and FFVII, but forgets to add their flair and originality.

+ Superb cut-scenes and polished presentation.
+ Deep and involving plot...
- ...which does cause the game to be a little slow
- Enemies always appear in exactly the same place.

OUT OF 100

85

EINHÄNDER

We ask: "Can a game named after a German masturbation technique succeed in a politically correct world?"

Einhänder

Publisher: Squaresoft

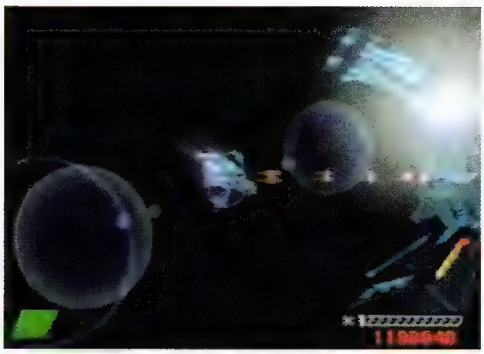
Developer: Squaresoft

Release Date: Out now (import)

Game Type: Shoot-'em-up

No of Players: One

Price: £50 approx



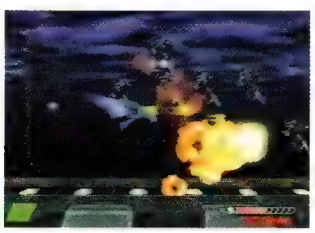
FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: You have to find the right weapon for each enemy you come across. Here's an example of how not to do it; lens flare is the norm in many a PlayStation game but when have you ever seen it looking this good?

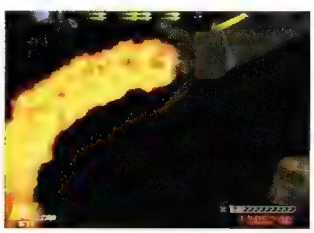
There really is no stopping them, is there?

Squaresoft are a stone on a roll of gargantuan proportions and Einhänder isn't about to gather any moss. A shoot-'em-up can't be that good though, can it? Well, when it's got pseudo-3D graphics that never fail to astound and dazzle, and gameplay that's not only fun but supremely challenging, it can.

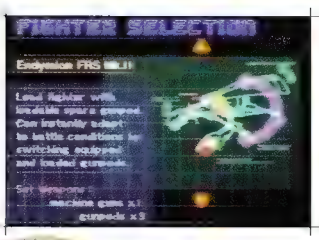
I say pseudo-3D graphics because Einhänder is not a 3D game. The highly dynamic camera and those chunky, painstakingly drawn backgrounds and enemy craft serve to fool you into thinking that you're playing a 3D game, but the rails soon kick back in to let you know that you're not. Still, rails are no bad thing when it comes to this sort of full-on, frantic blast-fest.

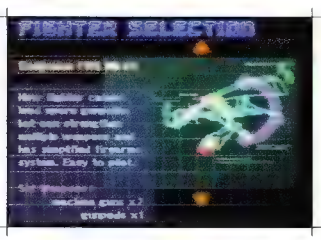
Right from the start you have to avoid flurries of enemy fire and lightning fast rogue ships and it

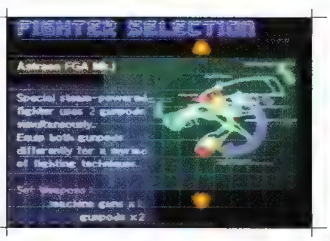




Choose Carefully, My Son...







Before entering the game proper you have to select one of three ships. However, instead of each ship having different weapons, they have varying cargo hold capacities, which basically translates as "some ships can carry more weapons than others". The Endymion FRS MKII is the best for beginners as you can carry three weapons simultaneously, although only one can be used at a time. The Endymion MKIII is also very easy to use, although it has no spare gunpods, making it harder to use in desperate combat situations. The granddaddy though is the steam powered Astreae FGA MKI, which can use two gunpods at the same time, making it the most devastating ship in the game.

Compatibility

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: The Blade weapon – straight outta the Jedi old skool; Einhänder doesn't just take you on a left to right, A to B journey, there are plenty of vertical and diagonal sections for you to blast your way through; another boss, another three continues to get past. It's worth it though!

doesn't get any easier as you progress; even the massive amount of cool weaponry pick-ups don't make the game any easier. They certainly add a different element to it though: every time you hit an enemy vehicle with a special weapon attached, it will be liberated, allowing you to do a fly-by whilst your natty little mechanical pick-up arm reaches out to collect the welcome addition to your firepower. Once you have the hardware in your grasp you can move it around your ship to find the best position for the situation you find yourself in. Most of the weaponry can be found on the first few levels but as the game becomes progressively harder, you need to figure out when and where to use each weapon to attain maximum impact.

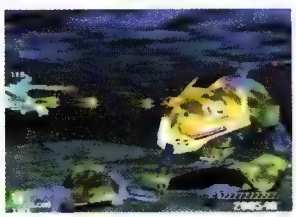
Think About It

This means that you actually have to use your noggin, rather than just hammer the fire button for the entire ten levels of the game. A little thought is also required at the start of the game, when you have the choice of three different ships, each of which offers a different number of set-up possibilities and a slightly different basic weapon.

Einhänder offers a vast amount of variety in terms of level design, which serves to add to that 'just one more go' feeling, which so many games are lacking these days. From picking your way through tight, high-tech space stations to flying down barren desert canyons or neon lit Japanese high streets, you never find yourself getting bored. Much of the scenery is also interactive, such as the huge military train that launches all manner of devastating hell on you, or the neon signs that have to be destroyed to avoid becoming part of the latest Fuji advert.

The icing on the cake, though, is the inclusion of a mass of superlative end of level bosses that you're forced to take on. Some of these beautifully drawn and realised robotic beasts will take you an age to get past, but when they look this dapper, who cares? All of this wouldn't look and play half as well, if it wasn't for the unique roving camera that Squaresoft have employed to make sure that the action stays hotter than Satan's underpants in the middle of July.

Einhänder is, at heart, just a 2D shoot-'em-up, but with Squaresoft on the case you know that it's going to be jam-packed with top drawer visuals, original ideas and quality gameplay. With superior graphics and gameplay that's mind-blowing at times, Einhänder is all set to rewrite the shoot-'em-up rule book and it's no surprise that Square are the ones behind it. So much for German masturbation.



ABOVE: The bosses have variable tactics and methods which can change every time you play, meaning that you haven't got a hope of learning the sequence.

The Competition

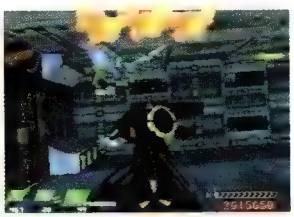
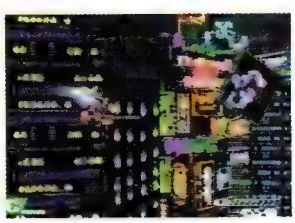
Space Invaders –
The original shoot-'em-up. One colour but the gameplay rocked.

Ray Storm –
Looks good, doesn't play quite so well.

R-Type –
Re-released on a compilation as *R-Types*. Still kicks more ass than Bruce Lee in a kebab queue scrap.

First Ten Minutes

It feels like trying to dodge rain drops in a monsoon, but you won't give up.

Rated by Saul Trewern

STATION		OUT OF 100
Simply the best shoot-'em-up available on the PlayStation. Roll on the Pal version.	+ Spectacular and in-depth visuals. + Crack-like addictiveness. - Causes acute sore thumb. - No Pal version, as of yet.	90

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THE eDGE

BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY

Cheating is good. Ignore the words of anal retentive individuals, who wish to spend their free time attempting to unlock that one elusive secret character or alternative end sequence. Sure, you want value for money, but not at the cost of your social life. Our advice to you is to take the easy option and cheat. We won't tell anyone.

WWF WARZONE

VIEW UNLOCKED CHEATS:
Press L1+R1 on the elevator screen to see a complete list of the hidden features and modes that have been unlocked.

PLAY AS CACTUS AND DUDE LOVE:
Win WWF title in challenge mode with Mankind under the medium or hard difficulty level. Cactus Jack and Dude Love will now be selectable.

PLAY AS TRAINER:
During the training mode select 'Custom' followed by 'Trainer' at the character selection screen.

WRESTLE AS SUE:
Win the WWF title in challenge mode with Bret Hart on the medium or hard difficulty level.

WRESTLE AS PAMELA:
Win the WWF title in challenge mode with Sue on the medium or hard difficulty level.

ADDITIONAL COSTUMES:
Win the WWF title in challenge mode with Kane under the medium or hard difficulty level to unlock further shirts, jackets, masks and shorts for the customised players.

GOLDUST IN DRAG:
Win the WWF title in challenge mode with Goldust on the medium or hard difficulty levels. Now, hold L2, R1 or R2 while re-selecting Goldust to reveal more costumes, including the Marilyn Monroe outfit.

STONE COLD STYLE:
Win the WWF title with Stone Cold on the medium or hard difficulty level. Highlight Stone Cold on the character select screen and press L2, R1, or R2 for extra costumes.

BIG HEAD MODE:
Win the WWF titles in challenge mode with the British Bulldog on the medium or hard difficulty level.

NO BLOCKING MODE:
Win the WWF title in challenge mode with Ken Shamrock on the hard difficulty level.

BAD MANNERS MODE:
Win the WWF title in challenge mode with Mosh on the medium difficulty level. Belching and breaking wind will now accompany each move.

CROWD GROWTH MODE:
Win the WWF title in challenge mode with Ahmed Johnson. Crowd interaction will now effect the wrestler's appearance: cheers will increase the size of the wrestler's head, while groans will make it shrink.

FIGHT IN WRESTLEMANIA RING:
Win both titles in challenge mode and defend the WWF title from all other wrestlers. The match will take place in the Wrestlemania ring.

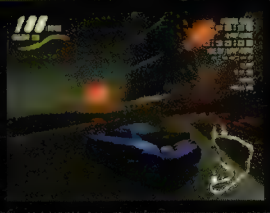
TAUNTS:
At any time during the bout, press either punch and block or tie up and kick to taunt your opponent.

MOTORHEAD

NEW BLUR CAMERA:
Enter SOFTHEAD as your name in the options menu.

OVERHEAD VIEW:
Enter SUPERCAR as your name in the options menu.

DIVISION TWO CARS AND TRACKS:
Enter COWRULES as your name in the options menu.



COLIN MCRAE RALLY

The following codes should be entered as passwords at the password screen:

FOG MODE:
Enter PEASOUPER.

FOUR WHEEL STEERING:
Enter TROLLEY.

REAR WHEEL STEERING:
Enter FORKLIFT.

TURBO MODE:
Enter MOREOOMPH.

CONTINUALLY TAP X, O TO ACCELERATE:
Enter BUTTONBASH.

GREEN JELLY CAR:
Enter BLANCMANGE.

CUSTOM RALLY EDITION CAR:
Enter KITCAR.

CUSTOMISABLE REPLAY:
Enter DIRECTORCUT.

DRIVE AS NICKY GRIST:
Enter BACKSEAT.

HIGH-PITCHED COMMENTS:
Enter HELIUMNICK.

GEX 3D: ENTER THE GECKO

DEBUG MODE:
Pause the game and highlight the "Exit" option. Hold L2 and press 4, O, 8, 2, 6(x2), 4, T, 8, 2. A sound will confirm this code has worked. Pause the game once again and then press Select to reveal the debug menu.

UNLIMITED LIVES:
Pause the game and highlight the "Exit" option. Hold L2 and press 8(x2), 2, 6, T, 2.

INVINCIBILITY:
Pause the game and highlight the "Exit" option. Hold L2 and press 4, 6, T, 2, 6, 4.

LEVEL SELECT:
Pause the game and highlight the "Exit" option. Hold L2 and press 6(x2), 4, 6, T, 2, 6.

BEST ENDING:
Enter the following password to instantly have all remotes and bonuses.
R1, R2, X, L2, S, X, S, R2, R2, R2, X, L2, S, X, R2, S, L2 R2, X, L2, S, X, R2, S, L2, R2, X, S .

BOMBERMAN WORLD

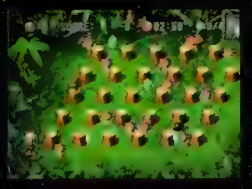
The following codes should be entered as passwords at the password screen:

BONUS VERSUS LEVEL:
Enter 5656 as a password.

BONUS BATTLE LEVEL:
Enter 4989 as a password.

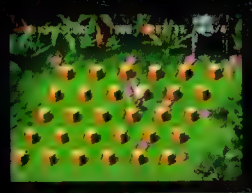
BATTLE ROYAL MODE:
Enter 1616 as a password.

LOONIE MODE:
Enter 4622 as a password.



LEVEL PASSWORDS:

1-1	8010	3-4	6502
1-2	1180	3-5	6809
1-3	8086	4-1	0627
1-4	2919	4-2	8808
1-5	1021	4-3	3674
2-1	0127	4-4	4891
2-2	1220	4-5	0605
2-3	1018	5-1	0730
2-4	0804	5-2	2151
2-5	0714	5-3	3562
3-1	1027	5-4	3812
3-2	2413	5-5	2203
3-3	3009		



NS NECESSAR

CARDINAL SYN

hen the following codes are entered, a sound will confirm they code have worked.

GHT AS BIMORPHIA:
ess 6(x3), 2, S on the
ress Start" screen.

GHT AS JUNI:
ess 8, 4, 4, 8, S on the
ress Start" screen.

GHT AS KAHN:
ess 8(x2), 2(x2), T on the
ress Start" screen.

GHT AS MOLOCH:
ess 8, 6, 2, 4, S on the
ress Start" screen.

FIGHT AS MONGWAN:
Press 2(x3), 8, T on the "Press Start" screen.

FIGHT AS REDEMPTOR:
Press 8, 2, 4, 6, O on the "Press Start" screen.

FIGHT AS STYGIAN:
Press 4, 6, 4, 6, T on the "Press Start" screen.

FIGHT AS VODU:
Press 4(x3), 8, O on the "Press Start" screen.

N2O: NITROUS OXIDE

ATER MODE:
nter O, X, S, T, T, O, T, O.

NLIMITED LIVES:
nter O, X, X, T, S, T, S, O.

EVEL SELECT:
nter S, O, X, T, T, X, O, X.

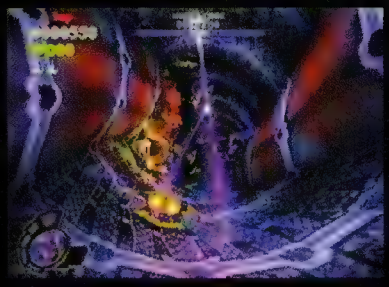
ONUS LEVEL SELECT:
nter S, S, S, T, O, T, S, S.

EW WEAPONS:
nter S, X, O, S, X, S, O, S.

REWALLS:
nter X, X, S, X, X, X, T, T.

IDDEN SHIP:
nter X, X, X, S, T, O, X, T.

ISABLE CHEATS:
nter S, S, X, O, O, O, O, T.



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DOOM

LL WEAPONS AND AMMO:
ause game, press X, S, L1, 8, 2, R2, 4, 4.

NVINCIBILITY:
ause game, press 2, L2, S, R1, 6, L1, 4, O.

EVEL WARP:
ause game, press 6, 4, R2, R1, T, L1, O, X.

X-RAY VISION:
Pause game, press L1, R2, L2, R1, 6, T, 6, 6.

MAP ALL PLUS ALL OBJECTS:
Pause game, press T, T, L2, R2, L2, R2, R1, O.

MAP ALL:
Pause game, press T, T, L2, R2, L2, R2, R1, S.

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- Xevious 3D
- Z

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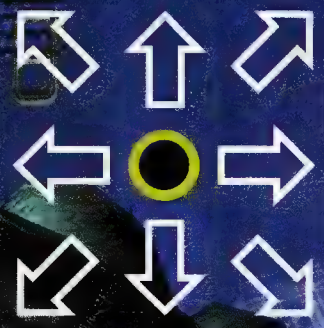
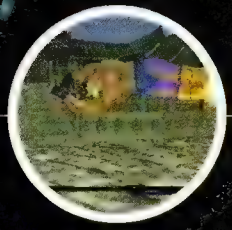


Tekken **is back and it's looking for trouble. Not a posse to turn and run, the Station tips team – The edge – have tackled Tekken 3 head-on to come up with this superlative moves guide for every fighter in the game. If you're struggling with the king of beat-em-ups, or if you feel you just need to brush up on your hand-to-hand skills, the following ten pages are where it's at...**



THE KEY:

Solid arrows - ↓ - Tap joypad
Light arrows - ⇩ - Hold joypad
N - Neutral joypad position
QCF - Quarter circle forward (↓, ↘, →)
QCB - Quarter circle back (↓, ↙, ←)
HCF - Half circle forward (←, ↙, ↓, ↘, →)
HCB - Half circle back (→, ↘, ↓, ↙, ←)
SS - Sidestep
N - Neutral the pad, so no directions are pressed
(W1) - While standing i.e. crouch and then let go of the d-pad
(WC) - While crouching i.e. press and hold down a split second before pressing the button
(FC) - Full Crouch. Hold down so that your character is visibly crouching
BK - With back to opponent
+ - The commands on either side of this must be input at the same time
1) - Start of a multipart. The following commands must be entered after this first one
_ - Either of the commands either side of this may be entered
c - Move must hit on counter to have noted effect
~ - The command after this must be performed very quickly, almost at the same time as the command before
! - This unblockable hits a downed opponent
- Pause slightly before doing the next command
ALL - Press ⊙+△+○+✕
<FLS> - From left-hand side of your opponent
<FRS> - From right-hand side of your opponent

GROUND POSITIONS

KND - Knockdown
(on ground, face up, feet towards opponent).
PLD - Play Dead
(on ground, face up, feet away from opponent).
SLD - Slide
(on ground, face down, feet away opponent).
FCD - Face Down
(on ground, face down, feet towards opponent).

POST-MOVE COMMENTS

OB - If not blocked this move forces opponent's back towards you.
OS - If not blocked this move forces opponent's side towards you.
DY - This move damages your character.
DS - Double Over Stun.
(opponent clutches stomach and falls over).
KS - Drop Knee Stun. If opponent is hit with move, they drop to one knee. If opponent is counterhit with move, they fall into SLD. The move creates guard stun (GS) if guarded correctly.
GS - Guard Stun.
CS - Crumple Stun (opponent crumples over when hit).
SG - Stagger (opponent is staggered backwards).
TS - Turn Stun
(move turns opponent sideways if guarded correctly).
CH - move must be a counterhit.
£££ - This is the most damaging forward throw or multipart this character has.

NINA WILLIAMS

Power: 6/10
Speed: 9/10
Appearance: 8/10
Special moves: 10/10
Ease to use: 7/10
Ease to master: 2/10

GRAPPLING TECHNIQUES

Arm Turn: ⊙+⊗
Lifting Toss: △+⊙
Neck Throw: ↗+⊙+△
Embracing Elbow: ↘, ↘+⊙ £££

SPECIAL MOVES

Bermuda Triangle: □, △, ⊙
Jail Crusher: □, △, ↓+⊗, ⊙
Jail Crusher-Uppercut: □, △, ↓+⊗, △
Biting Snake: □, △, □, ⊙
Double Explosion S: □, △, →+⊙+△
Double Explosion T: □, △, □, △, →+⊙+△
PK Combo: △, ⊗
PDK Uppercut Combo: △, ↓+⊗, △
PDK Roundhouse Combo: △, ↓+⊗, ⊙
Cross-Roundhouse: △, ⊙
Spike Combo-Uppercut: ⊗, ⊗, △
Spike Combo-Right HK: ⊗, ⊗, ⊙
Spike Combo-Right LK: ⊗, ⊗, ↓+⊙
Left-Right HK: ⊗, ⊙
Blonde Attack-Uppercut: ⊙, ⊗, △
Blonde Attack-Right HK: ⊙, ⊗, ⊙
Blonde Attack-Right LK: ⊙, ⊗, ↓+⊙
Low Jab-Rising Kick: ↓+□, N+⊙
Toe Kick: [↓+_FC] △, ⊙
Left LK-Right HK: [↓+_FC]⊗, N+⊙
Left LK-Right LK: [↓+_FC]⊗, ↓+⊙
Right LK-Backhand Chop: [↓+_FC] ⊙, □ (Note 1)
Blonde Bomb: [→_WS]+⊙+△
Power Blonde Bomb: →, →+⊙+△
Bad Habit: [→,→_QCF]+⊗ - DSc
Forward Flip Kick: [→, →_QCF]+⊙ - DY (miss)
Assassin Dagger: →, →+⊙ -OS
Panther Claw: →, →+△
Shut Up: ←, ↙, ↓, ↘+△
Creeping Snake: ↘+⊗, △, □, ⊙ (Note 1)
Creeping Snake-Upper: ↘+⊗, △, ↓+⊗, △
Creeping Snake-L HK: ↘+⊗, △, ⊗
Creeping Snake-L LK: ↘+⊗, △, ↓+⊗
Creeping Snake-R HK: ↘+⊗, △, ⊙
Assault Bomb: ↘+⊗, □, △, →+⊙+△
Flash Kick-Left LK: ↘+⊗, ⊗, ⊗, ⊗
Flash Kick-Right HK: ↘+⊗, ⊗, ⊗, ⊙
Flash Kick-Blonde Bomb: ↘+⊗, ⊗, ⊗, □, △, →+⊙+△
Left Mid-Right HK: ↘+⊗, ⊙
Left B-Hand Body Blow : ←+⊙
Single Slap: ←+△
Double Slap: ←+△, △
Helping Hand: ↙+⊙
Right B-Hand Body Blow: ↙+△ - DS
Slicer: ↙+⊙ - FCD
Geyser Cannon Combo: ↙+⊙, ⊗
Divine Cannon: ↓, ⇙+⊗
Modified Divine Cannon: ↙+⊗+⊙
Nicolella: ↗+⊗
Can Opener: ↗+⊙, ⊗, ⊙
Hopping LK-Uppercut: ↗, N, ↓+⊗, △
Hopping LK-Side Kick: ↗, N, ↓+⊗, ⊗
Hopping LK-Right HK: ↗, N, ↓+⊗, ⊙
Ground Sweep: FC, ↘+⊙
Running Jump Kick: →, →, →+⊗ (Note 2)
Heel Stomp: [↓_↘]+⊗+⊙
Snakeshot: SS+⊙
Liftshot: SS+△
Low Whip: SS+⊙
Spiral Explosion: SS+⊙+△
High/Mid Reversal: ←+[□+⊗_△+⊙]
Low Parry: [↓_↙]+[□+⊗_△+⊙]

UNBLOCKABLES

Evil Mist: HCF, ⇙+△+⊗ - SG
1) Hunting Swan: ⇙+⊙+△ - CS
2) Swan Cancel: ↑, ↑

Note 1 - Press ↑ or ↓ during the first hit will cause your player to sidestep
Note 2 - Turns into Bonecutter on counterhit.

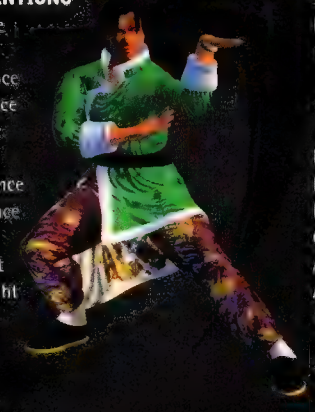
LEI WULONG

SPECIAL CONVENTIONS

SNS - Snake Stance
TGS - Tiger Stance
PNS - Panther Stance
DRG - Dragon Stance
CRS - Crane Stance

DRS - Drunken Stance
PHS - Phoenix Stance

SSL - Side Step Left
SSR - Side Step Right



Power: 7/10
Speed: 8/10
Appearance: 9/10
Special moves: 8/10
Ease to use: 6/10
Ease to master: 1/10

GRAPPLING TECHNIQUES

Chest Press: ⊙+⊗
Neck Snap: △+⊙
Tai Trip: →, →+⊙+△
Dragon Elbow Drop: ↗+⊙+△ - SLD £££

SPECIAL MOVES

Hook Punch: ⊙+△ - BK
Hook-Spin Back Blow: ⊙+△, ⊙ - BK
Spiral Upper: ⊙+△, △
High-Low Kick: ⊗, ⊗ - BK
1) Tornado Kick: ⊗~⊙ - BK GS
2) KND: ↓ - KND
1) Triple Tornado Kick: ⊗~⊙, ↑ - BK
2) KND: ↓ - KND
Rolling Kick: ⊙~⊙ - KND
Rolling Kicks: ⊙~⊙, ⊗ - KND
Lift Up Cannon: ⊙~⊙, ⊗, ⊗ - FCD
Clean Sweep: ⊙~⊗ - FCD
Art Of Snake: SS+⊙+⊙_△+⊗ - SNS
Art Of Snake: →+△+⊗ - SNS
1) Sidestep into TK: ⇨+⊗~⊙ - BK GS
2) KND: ↓ - KND
1) Sidestep into TTK: ⇨+⊗~⊙, ↑ - BK
2) KND: ↓ - KND
Razor Rush-SNS: →, N+⊙ [↑_↓] - SNS
Razor Rush-DRG: →, N+⊙, △ [↑_↓] - DRG
Razor Rush-PNS: →, N+⊙, △, □ [↑_↓] - PNS
Razor Rush-TGS: →, N+⊙, △, □, △ [↑_↓] - TGS
Razor Rush-Low: →, N+⊙, △, □, △, ⊗
Razor Rush-CRS: →, N+⊙, △, □, △, ⊙ [↑_↓] - CRS
Defense Breaker: →, N+△, □, △, □ - GS
One-Two Kick: →, N+⊗, ⊙
One-Two Kick & Low: →, N+⊗, ↓+⊙
Rush Combo & Mid Kick: →, N+⊙, □, △, ⊗, ⊙
Rush Combo & Low Kick: →, N+⊙, □, △, ⊗, ↓+⊙
Beating Low Kick: →+⊙, △, □, △, ⊗
Beating Middle Kick: →+⊙, △, □, △, ⊙[↑_↓] - CRS
Jumping Kick: →, →, →+⊗ - GS
Elbow Drop: [↗_↖]+△ - PLD
Reverse Falling Tree: BK [↗_↖]+△ - PLD
Cannonball: ←+⊙+△
Phoenix Illusion: ←+⊙+⊙ - PHS
Turn Around: ←+⊗+⊙ - BK
Rave Spin: ↙+⊙, ⊙ (Note 1)
Sidewind: ↓+⊙+△ - SLD
Play Dead: ↓+⊗+⊙ - PLD
Spinning Back Blow: BK ⊙ - BK
Low Back Spin: BK [↓+_FC]□ - BK
Reverse Uppercut: BK △
Back Flip Flop: BK ⊗+⊙, ⊗+⊙, ⊗+⊙ BK
Reverse Double Slicer: BK[↓+_FC]⊙, ⊙ (Note 1)
Drunk Master: →+⊗+⊙ - DRS
Drunk H/M Punch Parry: →+⊗+⊙
Low Parry: [↓_↙]+[□+⊗_△+⊙]

MOVES FROM PLAY DEAD POSITION (PLD)
Stand Up: ↑
Lei On Stomach: ⇩+⊙ - KND
Rave Spin: ⊗,⊙
Spring Kick: ⊗+⊙

MOVES FROM SLIDE POSITION (SLD)
Stand Up: ↑
Lei On Back: □ - PLD
Sliding Kick: ⊙~⊗

PAUL PHOENIX

Power: 9/10
Speed: 6/10
Appearance: 7/10
Special moves: 9/10
Ease to use: 4/10
Ease to master: 7/10

GRAPPLING TECHNIQUES

Shoulder Toss: ⊙+⊗
Arm Bar Rollover: △+⊙
Flip Throw: ←+△+⊗
Shoulder Ram: →, →+⊙+△
Face Smash: ↘+⊙+△ – £££

SPECIAL MOVES

PDK Combo: ⊙, ⊙
PK Combo: △, ⊗
Reverse PDK Combo: △, ↓+⊗
Shoulder Ram: →+⊙+⊙
Quick PK Combo: →+△⊗
God Hand: →+⊙+△ – KS
Flash Elbow: →, →+△
Double Hop Kick-High: →, →+⊗, ⊙, ⊙
Triple Hop Kick Combo: →, →+⊗, ⊙, [→_↘]+⊙
Double Hop Kick-Low: →, →+⊗, ⊙, [↙_↓]+⊙
Rolling Kick: →, →+⊙ GS
Hammer Punch: ↓+⊙
Hammer-Power Punch: ↓+⊙, △
Hammer-Falling Leaf: ↓+⊙, ⊙, △
Down Strike: ↓+△ (Note 1)
Falling Leaf: ↓+⊙, △
Shredder: ↗+⊗, ⊙
Thruster: QCF+⊙ – DSc
Deathfist: QCF+△
Super Death Fist: ←+⊙+△
Sway: QCB, N
Sway-God Hammer: QCB, N+⊙ – BNc
Sway-Power Fist: QCB, N+△ – GS
Sway-Phoenix Rush: QCB, N+⊗, △, ⊙
Sway-Stone Break Rush: QCB, N+⊗, △, △
Jaw Breaker: FC, ↘+△
Gut Buster: FC, ↘+△, ⊙
Stone Breaker: FC, ↘+△, △
1) Taunt: FC (for three secs.)
2) Somersault: ↑+△+⊗+←) – DY

UNBLOCKABLE

Super Death Fist: ←+⊙+△

Note 1 - Can only be performed when opponent is down

MOKUJIN

Power: Varies
Speed: Varies
Appearance: 9/10
Special moves: Varies
Ease to use: Varies
Ease to master: 0/10

Mokujin is an old-style training dummy, but in Tekken 3 he is simply a random character. Watch his entrance moves or stance to figure out which character he is playing as. Most characters are pretty definitive, but if you're not sure who he is, try the move →, →+△. This will normally tell you what character you are mimicking. If not, go straight for a throw. This will almost certainly tell you who you are. If you still can't recognise who you are, you really shouldn't be playing as Mokujin!

MOVES FROM FACE DOWN POSITION (FCD)
Stand Up: ↑
Lay On Back: ⊙ – KND
1) Laying Slide: ⊗~⊙ – PLD
2) Rave Spin: ⊙
Go To Sleep: ⊙~⊗ – FCD

MOVES FROM KNOCKDOWN POSITION (KND)
Stand Up: ↑
Lei On Stomach: ↓ +⊙ – FCD
Hop Up: ⊗+⊙

MOVES FROM SNAKE STANCE (SNS)
<on one leg, hand raised in front>
Spin To Grab: ⊙+⊗
Rushing Snake: ⊙, ⊙, ⊙, ⊙, ⊙, ⊙ [⇨] – SNS
Snake Fang: △ DSc
Snakebite: △, △, △ DSc (Note 4)
Rattlesnake: ⊗ FCD
Low Kick: ⊙ SNS
Dragon Stance: SSL – DRG
Panther Stance: SSR– PNS

MOVES FROM DRAGON STANCE (DRG)
<fists up in a defensive pose>
Spin To Grab: ⊙
Dragon Roar: △ [⇨] – GS [TGS]
Dragon Spark: ⊙+△ [⇨] – TGS
Dragon Blast: ⊗
Rush Combo: ⊙, ⊙, △, ⊗, ⊙
Rush Combo & Low Kick: ⊙, ⊙, △, ⊗, ↓+⊙
Tiger Stance: SSL – TGS
Snake Stance: SSR – SNS

MOVES FROM TIGER STANCE (TGS)
<hands in front, palms forward>
Tiger Strike:⊙ – BN GS
Tiger Claw: △ – KS
Tiger Kick: ⊗
Razor Rush-SNS: ⊗, ⊙ [↑_↓] – SNS
Razor Rush-DRG: ⊗, ⊙, △ [↑_↓] – DRG
Razor Rush-PNS: ⊗, ⊙, △, ⊙ [↑_↓] – PNS
Razor Rush-TGS: ⊗, ⊙, △, ⊙, △ [↑_↓] – TGS
Razor Rush-CRS: ⊗, ⊙, △, ⊙, △, ⊙ [↑_↓] – CRS
Tiger Kick-Razor Low: ⊗, ⊙, △, ⊙, △, ⊗
Tiger Tail: ⊙ – RC
High/Mid Parry: ⇨
Snake Stance: SSL –SNS
Dragon Stance: SSR – DRG

MOVES FROM PANTHER STANCE (PNS)
<crouching down, hands waving low>
Panther Scratch: ⊙, △
Panther Paw: △ (Note 2)
Panther Tail: ⊗ (Note 3)
Beating Low Kick: ⊙, △, ⊙, △, ⊗
Beating Middle Kick: ⊙, △, ⊙, △, ⊙ [↑_↓] – CRS
Low Parry: ⇨
Snake Stance: SSL –SNS
Crane Stance: SSR – CRS

MOVES FROM CRANE STANCE (CRS)
<both hands high, looks like Karate Kid>
Crane's Bill: ⊙ – GS
Wing Of Crane: △ – OB BK
Crane Dance: ⊗, ⊙, △, ⊗
Crane Kick: ⊙

MOVES FROM DRUNKEN STANCE (DRS)
<looking drunk, staggering around>
Drunken Lunge: ⊙
Staggering Slide: ⊗+⊙ – FCD

MOVES FROM PHOENIX STANCE (PHS)
<on back leg, arms raised flamenco style>
Hopping Phoenix: ⊗, ⊗, ⊗, ⊗

UNBLOCKABLE FROM PHOENIX STANCE

Phoenix Strike: ⊙

Note 1 - Hold ↑ or ↓ immediately after first hit for SNS.
Note 2 - If Panther Paw is blocked, can link directly into Defense Breaker.
Note 3 - Holdback after Panther Tail for Phoenix Illusion.
Note 4 – Holding forward after the first or second hit results in Dragon Stance, holding forward after third hit results in Panther Stance.

JIN KAZAMA

Power: 8/10
Speed: 8/10
Appearance: 8/10
Special moves: 8/10
Ease to use: 7/10
Ease to master: 0/10

GRAPPLING TECHNIQUES

Bitch Kicks: ⓓ+ⓧ
Over Shoulder Snap: Ⓐ+ⓞ
Leg Trip: QCB+ⓓ+ⓧ
Striking Oshi-Taoshi: ↘+Ⓐ+ⓧ – £££
Stonehead: →, →+ⓓ+Ⓐ

SPECIAL MOVES

Shining Fists: ⓓ, ⓓ, Ⓐ
Devil Fists: ⓓ, Ⓐ, Ⓐ
Shoot The Works-High: ⓓ, Ⓐ, ⓧ, ⓞ – GS
Shoot The Works-Upper: ⓓ, Ⓐ, ⓧ, →+ⓞ – GS
S-2-Knee: ⓓ, Ⓐ, ⓞ
White Heron: ⓓ+ⓞ
White Heron into Roundhouse: ⓓ+ⓞ, Ⓐ, ⓞ
White Heron into Sweep: ⓓ+ⓞ, Ⓐ, ↓+ⓞ
Back Spin Kick: ⓞ
Demon Scissors: ⓞ~ⓧ – KND
Power Overhead: →+Ⓐ – KS
Spinning High Kick: →+ⓧ
Knee: →+ⓞ
Rush Punch: →, →+Ⓐ
Foot Jam: →, →+ⓧ – GS
Slash Kick: →, →, →+ⓧ – GS
Twin Lancers: ↘+ⓓ, Ⓐ – KS
Double Axe: ↘+ⓞ, ⓞ
Can Can Kicks: ↓+ⓧ+ⓞ
Twin Pistons: WS+ⓓ, Ⓐ
Rising Upper: WS+Ⓐ
Rising Double Axe: WS+ⓞ, ⓞ
Tooth Fairy: SS+Ⓐ
Laser Cannon: ←, →+Ⓐ, ⓓ, Ⓐ – DSc
Laser Scraper: ←, →+Ⓐ, ⓓ, ↓+Ⓐ – DSc
Thunder Godfist-M/Kick: →, N, ↓, ↘+ⓓ, ⓧ
Thunder Godfist-Sweep: →, N, ↓, ↘+ⓓ, ⓞ
Wind Godfist: →, N, ↓, ↘+Ⓐ
Electric Godfist: →, N, ↓, ↘+Ⓐ – GS
Hell Sweeps: →, N, ↓, ↘+ⓓ, ⓞ
Corpse Splitter: ↘+Ⓐ+ⓞ
Leaping Spin Kicks: ↗+ⓓ, ⓞ, ⓞ, ⓞ
Force Block: ←+ⓓ+Ⓐ
Reversal: [←+ⓓ+ⓧ_←+Ⓐ+ⓞ]

UNBLOCKABLES

Lightning Uppercut: ←+ⓓ+ⓞ
Super Lightning Uppercut: ⇦+ⓓ+ⓞ

KING

Power: 8/10
Speed: 5/10
Appearance: 8/10
Special moves: 10/10
Ease to use: 4/10
Ease to master: 1/10

GRAPPLING TECHNIQUES

Swinging DDT: ⓓ+ⓧ
Suplex: Ⓐ+ⓞ
DDT: ↓#, ↙, ↓, ↙+ⓓ+Ⓐ
Tombstone Piledriver: ↙, →+Ⓐ
Giant Swing: →, HCF+ⓓ –£££
Frankensteiner: ↘+ⓧ+ⓞ – BK
Figure Four Leg Lock: ↙+ⓓ+Ⓐ
Wishbone Powerbomb: ↓, ↙, ←+ⓓ+Ⓐ
Coconut Crush: ↘+Ⓐ+ⓧ
Powerbomb: ↓+[ⓓ+ⓧ or Ⓐ+ⓞ] <opponent crouching>

SPECIAL MOVES

Axel Twist: ⓓ+Ⓐ – BK
Axel Spinner: ⓓ+Ⓐ, ⓓ
Strike Elbow: ↘+ⓓ – KS
Forearm Bust: ↘+Ⓐ
Low Punch-Quick Upper: ↓+ⓓ, N+Ⓐ
King Flicker: →, →+Ⓐ
Stomach Smash: →, →, N+Ⓐ – DSc
Black Bomb: →, ↓, ↘, N+ⓓ+Ⓐ – BNc
Leg Breaker: FC, ↘+ⓓ
Crouching Upper: FC, ↘+Ⓐ
Knuckle Bomb: ↗+ⓓ+Ⓐ
Elbow Drop: [↖_↑_↗]+Ⓐ+ⓞ – PLD GS
Mini Elbow Drop: ↓+ⓓ+Ⓐ – PLD GS
Shoulder Tackle: →+Ⓐ+ⓧ
Ali Kicks: ↓+ⓧ+ⓞ, ⓞ, ⓞ, ⓞ
Ali Kicks Into Uppercut: ↓+ⓧ+ⓞ, [ⓞ], Ⓐ
Exploder: ⓧ+ⓞ_→, →+ⓧ+ⓞ – KND GS
Running Exploder: →, →, →+ⓧ+ⓞ – KND GS
Jail Kick: →, →+ⓞ
Prison Break: ←+ⓞ – BK
Boomerang: SS+ⓧ+ⓞ – GS
Knockout Punch: SS+Ⓐ – DSc
High/Mid Kick Reversal: ←+ⓓ+ⓧ_Ⓐ+ⓞ
Low Parry: ↓_↙+ⓓ+ⓧ_Ⓐ+ⓞ

UNBLOCKABLES

Jaguar Lariat: →+ⓓ+Ⓐ
Push Block: →, →, N+ⓓ+Ⓐ – GS
Moonsault: ⓓ+ⓞ – FCD
Reverse Moonsault: BK ⓓ+ⓞ – FCD
Atomic Blaster: BK ⓓ+Ⓐ

HEIHACHI MISHIMA

Power: 9/10
Speed: 7/10
Appearance: 7/10
Special moves: 9/10
Ease to use: 6/10
Ease to master: 7/10

GRAPPLING TECHNIQUES

Neck Breaker: ⓓ+ⓧ
Powerbomb: Ⓐ+ⓞ
Stonehead: →, →+ⓓ+Ⓐ – £££
Headbutt Carnival: →, →+ⓓ+ⓞ

SPECIAL MOVES

One-Two Punches: ⓓ, Ⓐ
Shining Fists: ⓓ, ⓓ, Ⓐ
Devil Fists: ⓓ, Ⓐ, Ⓐ
Demon Executor: ⓓ, Ⓐ, Ⓐ~ⓓ+Ⓐ
Demon Scissors: ⓞ~ⓧ – KND DY
Demon Palm: ⓓ+Ⓐ
Demon Massacre: →+ⓓ, ←+Ⓐ, ⓓ – GS
Demon Lair: →+ⓓ, ←+Ⓐ, ⓞ – GS
Backhand: [→_⇨]+Ⓐ
Demon Shout: [→_⇨]+Ⓐ~ⓓ+Ⓐ
Right Splits Kick: →+ⓞ
Demon Uppercut: →, →+Ⓐ
Left Splits Kick: →, →+ⓧ – GS DSc
Slash Kick: →, →, →+ⓧ – GS
Demon's Boar: ←+Ⓐ – GS
Shadow Step: ←, ←, N+ⓧ+ⓞ
Tile Splitter: ↓+ⓓ
Tile Splitter, Death Fist: ↓+ⓓ, Ⓐ
Geta Stomp: ↓+ⓞ
Twin Pistons: ↘+ⓓ, Ⓐ
Hell Axle: ↗+ⓧ, ⓞ – GS
Rising Sun: ↗+ⓞ, ⓞ
Deathfist: QCF+Ⓐ
Thunder Godfist: →, N, ↓, ↘+ⓓ
Wind Godfist: →, N, ↓, ↘+Ⓐ
Jumping Mid Kick: →, N, ↓, ↘+ⓧ
Jumping Low Kick: →, N, ↓, ↘+ⓧ
1) Hell Sweeps: →, N, ↓, ↘+ⓞ (ⓞ, ⓞ)
2) Thunder Godfist: ⓓ
2) Demon Godfist: Ⓐ
2) Tsunami Kick: N+ⓞ, ⓞ
Tsunami Kick: WS+ⓞ, ⓞ
Auger (Taunt): Ⓐ+ⓧ+ⓞ

UNBLOCKABLE

Demon Tile Splitter: ↓+ⓓ+ⓞ

LING XIAOYU

Power: 5/10
Speed: 10/10
Appearance: 7/10
Special moves: 6/10
Ease to use: 8/10
Ease to master: 3/10

GRAPPLING TECHNIQUES

Force Slam: ⊙+⊗
Arm Flip: △+⊙
Human Hurdle: →+△~⊙
Dislocator: QCB+△ -£££
Back Layout: BK →, →+⊗+⊙
Jumping Clutch: BK →, →+[⊙+⊗ or △+⊙]

SPECIAL CONVENTIONS

AOP - Art Of Phoenix Stance
HYP - Hypnotist Stance

SPECIAL ARTS

April Showers: △, ⊙ - BK
May Flowers: △, ↘+⊙
Spinner Away: ⊗+⊙
Spinner Near: ↓+⊗+⊙
Cloud Kick: →+⊗
Cartwheel Right: →+⊙+△
Forward Roll: →+⊗+⊙
Phoenix Wings: →, →+⊙+△, ⊙+△ - BNc KS
Raccoon Swing: →, →+⊗ - OS BK
Step Kick: →, →+⊙ - GS
Front Layout: →, →+⊗+⊙
Belly Chop-Backward: ↘+⊙ - BK
Belly Chop-Forward: ↘+⊙
Butter The Bread: ↘+△ - SG
Great Wall-Left: ←+⊙
Great Wall-Right: ←+△
Hypnotist Stance: ←+⊙+△ - HYP
Raindance: ←+⊗+⊙ - BK
Storming Flower: ↙+⊙
Knee Cracker: ↙+⊗ -GS
Nutcracker: ↙+⊙ - KS
Back Palm-Backward: ↑+⊙ - BK
Back Palm-Forward: ⇧+⊙
Double Fan: ↑+⊙+△
Hydrangea: ↑+⊙+△, △
Fortune Cookie: ↑+⊙+△, △, ⊙
Ginger Snap: ↑+⊙+△~⊗+⊙
Cyanide: [↑_↗]+⊙ - BNc
Sunset Fan: ↓+⊙
Flapping Wings: ⇩+⊙ - AOP
Phoenix Stance: ↓+⊙+△ - AOP
Sunflower: WS+△ -BK
Wake Up Call: WS+△~⇨
Skyscraper Kick: WS+⊙
Lotus Twist: FC, ↘+△, ⊙
Shady Lotus: FC, ↘+△ - BK
Quick Shady Lotus: FC, ↘+△, ⇘
Fire Dancer: FC, ⊗, △, ⊙, ⊙
Flower Garden: FC, ↘+⊙ - AOP
Double Map Sweep: FC, ↘+⊙, ⊙
Low Back Turn: FC, ↙+⊗+⊙ - BK
False Salute (taunt): ⊙+⊗+⊙
Greetings (taunt): △+⊗+⊙
High/Mid Parry: ⊙+⊙
Low Parry: [↓_↙]+⊙+⊙

MOVES FROM ART OF PHOENIX STANCE (AOP)
Butterfly: ↓ - AOP
Stand: ↑
Jump: ⇧
Roll-Throw: ⊙+⊗ or △+⊙
Sideroll: ⊙+⊗ or △+⊙~⇩
Left Handful: ⊙
Right Handful: △
Wave Crest-Power: ⊙+△
Wave Crest-Quick: ↓+⊙+△
Wave Crest-Heavy: ↓+⊙+△
Knee Stabber: ⊗ - AOP
Back Kick: ⊙
Flower Scissors: ⊙~← - BK
Firecracker: ⊙~⊗ - KND
Firecracker-Roll Up: ⊙~⊗, ↑
Firecracker-Roll Down: ⊙~⊗, ↓
Back Turn: →+⊙+△ - BK
Roll Ball: →+⊗+⊙
Flower Garden: →+⊙ - AOP
Double Map Sweep: →+⊙, ⊙
Double Barrel Shotgun: [↖_↑_↗]+⊗, ⊗
Double Scissor Kick: [↖_↑_↗]+⊗, ⊙
Sky Kick: [↖_↑_↗], ⊗
Pirouette Kick: [↖_↑_↗]N+⊗ - OB
Crane Kick: [↖_↑_↗]N+⊙
Flower Power: ↑+⊙, ⊙
Trick Flower: ⇧+⊙ - BK

MOVES FROM BACK TURNED (BK)
Reverse Slap: △ BK
Dark & Stormy: △, ⊙, ⊙
Mistrust: ⊙
Spin Tornado-Up: ⊗+⊙
Spin Tornado-Down: ↓+⊗+⊙
Spin Tornado-Away: ↑+⊗+⊙ - BK
California Roll: →+⊗+⊙ - BK
Cyclone: →+⊗+⊙~⊗+⊙ - BK
Peg Leg: →, →+⊗ - BK
Back Layout: →, →+⊗+⊙ - BK
Ultra Phoenix: ↓+⊙+△ - AOP
Back Circle Breaker: ↓+⊗ - BK
Switch Circle Breaker: ⇩+⊗

MOVES FROM HYPNOTIST STANCE (HYP)
Spin Sticker: △ (Note 1)

UNBLOCKABLE FROM HYPNOTIST STANCE

Thunder Strike: ⊙+△ (Note 1)

Note 1 - The further Ling walks, the more damage it does.

GON

Power: 8/10
Speed: 7/10
Appearance: 8/10
Special moves: 8/10
Ease to use: 8/10
Ease to master: 7/10

GRAPPLING TECHNIQUES

Kickup-Bite Grab: [⊙+⊗ or △+⊙] - £££
Tail Tossover: ←+⊙+△

SPECIAL MOVES

Advancing Punches: ⊙, ⊙...
Mid Headbutt: ⊗+⊙ - CS
Tailspins: ⊙, ⊙, ⊙, ⊙, ⊙, ⊗+⊙
Helicopter: →+△+⊗
Double Sweeps: →+⊗, ⊗
Mini Exploder: →+⊗+⊙ - GS
Rushing Headbutts: F+⊙+△, ⊙+△, ⊙+△
Rolling Sawblade: →, →+⊙+△ - GS
Roll Sawblade-Upper: →, →+⊙+△, ⊙+△ - GS
Dino Shoulder: →, N, ↓, ↘+⊙+△
Roger Punch: ←+⊙ - GS
Norwegian Step: ←+⊗+⊙ [⇦]
Tail Smack: ↓+⊙ - GS
Whiff Frankensteiner: ↘+⊗+⊙ - KND
Lay Down: [↓_↙+⊙+△] - PLD
1) Sit: ↙+⊗+⊙
2) Roll Forward-Boot: →, [⊗_⊙]
2) Roll Back-Roo Kick: ←, [⊗_⊙]
Buttflop: ↑+⊙
Quick Helicopter Spin: ↑+⊗+⊙ - KS
Dino Gonfist: [↗_↑_↑/←]+⊙
Backdrop: [↗_↑_↑/←]+⊙+△
Belly Flop: [⇗_⇧, ⇖]+⊙+△ - GS
Mini Buttflop: [↗_↑_↑/←], [⊗_⊙]
Hop Kick Left: [↗_↑_↑/←]+⊗
Hop Kick Right: [↗_↑/←]+⊙
Flipstomp-Buttflip: [↗_↑/←]+⊗+⊙
Buttflop: [⇗_⇧_⇖]+[⊗_⊙]
Helicopter Spin: [⇗_⇖]+⊗+⊙ - KS
Mini Upper: WS+[⊙_△]
Low Shin Charge: FC, ↘+⊗+⊙
Roll Back Roo Kick: FC, ↙+⊗+⊙
Headdive: RN, →+⊗+⊙
Kickup: KND, [⊗_⊙]
Scoot Kick: FCD, [⊗_⊙]
Lying Tailsmack: PLD, [⊗_⊙] - GS
Lying Kickout: SLD, [⊗_⊙]
Roll Forward-Boot: SLD, →, [⊗_⊙]
Roll Back-Roo Kick: SLD, ←, [⊗_⊙]

UNBLOCKABLES

Fire Breath: ⊙+△
1) Dino Charge: ⊙+△~[⊙_△]
2) Fall Down: ~△
Super Dino Rush: →+⊙+⊙
Dino Fart: ←+⊙ - CS
Guard Break: ↘+⊙+△ - GS

FOREST LAW

Power: 6/10
Speed: 9/10
Appearance: 9/10
Special moves: 6/10
Ease to use: 9/10
Ease to master: 7/10

GRAPPLING TECHNIQUES

Dragon's Fire: ⊡+⊗
Leg Snapper: △+⊙
Dragon Dive: →+△+⊗
Chastisement Punch: ↘+⊡+△
Bulldog: ↘+⊡+△, ⊡, △, ⊡+△ - £££
Knee Lift: →, →+⊗+⊙

SPECIAL MOVES

Machine Gun Arrow: ⊡, ⊡, ⊡, ⊡, ⊡ (Note 1)
Mini Rave War Attack: △, △
H/Kick-Somersault Kick: ⊗, ⊙
Triple Head Kick: ⊗, ⊗, ⊗
Dbl Head Kick-Somersault: ⊗, ⊗, ⊙
Dbl Head Kick-M/Kick: ⊗, ⊗, →+⊗
Trpl Head Kick-M/Kick: ⊗, ⊗, ⊗, →+⊗
Trpl Head Kick-Somersault: ⊗, ⊗, ⊗, ⊙
Shaolin Spin Kicks: ⊙, ⊗, ⊙
Crescent Kick: ⊙, ↑+⊗
Quick Somersault: ⊗+⊙
Back Flipper: [⊗+⊙, ⊙_↑+⊙, ⊗]
Poison Arrow: →+△~⊡
Rave War Attack: →+△, △, △
Running Side Kick: →, →, →+⊗ - GS
Junkyard Attack: ←+△, ⊗, ⊙
Dragon Storm: ←+⊡, △, ⊡
Dragon Low Kick: ↓+⊗
Tricky Kicks-M/Kick: ↓+⊗, ⊗, →+⊗
Tricky Kicks-Somersault: ↓+⊗, ⊗, ⊙
Tricky Kicks-Somersault: ↓+⊗, ⊗, ⊗, ⊙
Tricky Kicks-Somersault: ↓+⊗, ⊗, ⊗, ⊗, ⊙
Frogman: ↓+⊗+⊙
Frogman Feint: ↓+⊗+⊙~D - KND
Mid Kick: ↘+⊗
Front Kick-Somersault: ↘+⊙, ⊗
Dragon Whip: ↙+△ BK
Elbow Spring Kick: ↙+△, ⊙
Elbow Spring Feint: ↙+△, ⊙~D - PLD
Dragon Tail: ↙+⊙
Jump Kick-Somersault: [↑/←_↑_↗]⊗, ⊙
Double Dragon: SS+⊗+⊙
Side Kick-Somersault: WS+⊗, ⊙
Front Kick-Somersault: WS, ⊙, ⊗
Double Impact: FC, ⊗, ⊙
Body Blow-Somersault: [↓+_FC]△, ⊗
Low Kick-Somersault: [↓+_FC]⊙, ⊗
Somersault Fake: FC, [↑/←_↑_↗], ⊙
Catapult Kick Low: FC, [↖_⇧_↗]+⊙
Catapult Kick High: FC, [↑/←_↑_↗]+⊙
Rainbow Kick: FC, [↖_⇧_↗]+⊗+⊙ - KND
Dragon Slide: FC, ↘, ↓, ↘+⊗
Fatal Backhand: BK [⊡_△] - OB
Blackout: ALL, ⊡
Mugging: ALL, ⊙, ⊗
1) Trick Step: ←+⊙+△
2) Dragon Blow: ⊡
2) Dragon Fist: △
1) Punch Reversal: ←+⊙+△ (as counter)
2) Dragon Mid Kick: ⊗
2) Dragon Low Kick: ⊙
High/Mid Parry: ←+[⊙+⊗_△+⊙]
Low Parry: [↓_↙]+[⊡+⊗_△+⊙]

UNBLOCKABLES

1) Dragon Fang: ↙+⊡+△
2) Dragon Cancel: ↑, ↑
1) Punch Reversal: ←+⊙+△ c
2) Fatal Backhand: ⊡ - OB
2) Stagger Fist: △ - SG

Note 1 - Can be chained directly into Mini Rave War Attack or Rave War Attack between ⊡-⊙ jabs.

YOSHIMITSU

Power: 7/10
Speed: 7/10
Appearance: 9/10
Special moves: 7/10
Ease to use: 7/10
Ease to master: 6/10

SPECIAL CONVENTION

Sword Debate Position: S+⊗+⊙ - SDP

GRAPPLING TECHNIQUES

Flying Body Slam: ⊡+⊗
Jaw Smash: △+⊙
Rainbow Drop: QCB+⊙+△ - £££
Life Siphon: SDP [⊙+⊙_△+⊗]
Live Give: SDP [F+⊙+⊙_F+△+⊗]

SPECIAL MOVES

Punch-Double Uppercut: ⊙, △, ⊡
PK Combo: △, ⊗
PDK Combo: △, ↓+⊗
Zig-Zag: ⊗, ⊙
Kangaroo Kick: ⊙~⊗
Triple Roundhouses: ⊙, ⊙, ⊙ - TS
Ninja Blade Rush: →, →+△
Ninja Blade Slice: →, →+△ - CH
Energy Gain: ↓+⊗+⊙
Knee Bash: →, →+⊙
Dive Bomb: →, →+⊡+△ - BK
Shark Attack Combo: →, →+⊗+⊙, ⊙+△, ⊗+⊙
Stone Fists: ⇦+⊡, ⊡, ⊡, ⊡, ⊡
Uppercut-Backhand: ↘+⊡, △ - OB
Door Knocker: ↘+⊡, ⊡, ⊡ - GS
Basic Uppercut: ↘+△
Side Kick: ↘+⊙
Stone Backhands: ⇙+△, △, △, △, △, △
1) Spinning Low Kicks: ⇙+⊗, ⊗, ⊗, ⊗, ⊗
2) Front Kick: →+⊙
Sword Debate Position: S+⊗+⊙ - SDP
Jumping Twist Foot: ↑/←_↑_↗]+⊙
Lunging Sweep: FC, ↘+⊗
Sit: ↓+⊗+⊙
Gain Life: ↓+⊗+⊙, N
Teleport: ↓+⊗+⊙[←_→]
Meditate: ↓+⊗+⊙, ↓
Feint Stone Backhands: ↓+⊗+⊙, △, △, △, △, △
Feint Kangaroo Kick: ↓+⊗+⊙, ⊙
Sit-Stand Up: ↓+⊗+⊙, ⇧
Spinning Evade: ←+⊗+⊙ (up to six times) - DY
Poison Wind: ↗+⊗+⊙
Poison Rush: ↗+⊗+⊙, ←+⊙
Poison Typhoon: ↗+⊗+⊙, ←+⊡, ⊗+⊙
1) Poison Hurricane: ↗+⊗+⊙, ←+⊡, ⊙
2) Delay Sword (Note 1): ⇙
3)Sword Slice: N
1) Sword Slice: ↙+⊡
2) Delay Sword (Note 1): ~N, ⇙
3) Sword Slice: N
Backflip: ↑/←

UNBLOCKABLES

Sword Impale: ←, ←+⊙
1) Spinning Sword: ←, ←+⊙~⊡
2) Spin Cancel: ←, ←
Sword Sweep: FC, ↙, ←+⊡
Helicopter Leap: ⇗+⊡+△
Heli Quick Down Slash: ⇗+⊡+△~↓
Reverse Helicopter: ⇗+⊡+△, ⇦
1) Standing Suicide: ↓+⊡+⊙ - DY
2) Spinning Suicide: ⇦+⊡, ⊡, ⊡... - DY
Fake Turning Suicide: →, →+⊡+⊙, N - BK
1) Turning Suicide: →, F+⊡+⊙ - DY
2) Second Stab: →, → - DY
1) Sword Pogo: ↑+⊡+△
2) Pogo Rush: ←, ←_→, →
2) Pogo Hop: ↑/←_↑_↗
2) Kangaroo Kick: ⊗+⊙
1) Death Pose: ⇦+⊡+△
2) Bad Breath: ANY - CS
Wood Chopper: →, →+⊗, ⊡
Double Front Slice: QCF+⊡
Sword Counter: ⇦+⊡+⊙

Note 1 - After six hops, Sword Slice does 100% damage.

EDDY GORDO / TIGER JACKSON

Power: 8/10
Speed: 8/10
Appearance: 8/10
Special moves: 8/10
Ease to use: 10/10
Ease to master: 0/10

HSP - Handstand Position
RLX - Relaxed Position

GRAPPLING TECHNIQUES

Rio Deal: ⊙+⊗
Rio Special: △+⊙
Rodeo Spin: HCF+⊙+△ - EEE

SPECIAL MOVES

Rewinder Away: ⊙+△
Rewinder Near: ↓+⊙+△
1) Slippery Kick: ⊗~⊙ - RLX (Note 1)
2) Slider: ⊙ (Note 1)
2) Side Flop: ⊙, ⊙ (Note 1)
2) Slider-Needle: ⊙, ⊙+△
2) Slider-Hammerhead: ⊙, ⊙+△, ⊙+△
1) Satellite Moon: ⊙~⊗
2) Hot Plate Special: ⊗ RLX (Note 1)
2) Roundhouse: ⊙
Back Handspring Kick: ⊗+⊙
Fakie Handspring: ⊗+⊙~← - HSP
Crying Needle: FC, ⊙+△
Hammerhead: FC, ⊙+△, ⊙+△
Front Stinger: [FC_WS+]⊗+⊙ (Notes 1 and 2)
Face Jammer: WS+⊗
Circle Kick: WS+⊙
Shin Cutter Combo: →+△, ⊙, ⊙
Brush Fire: →+⊗ HSP
Samba: →+⊙ (Note 1) (Note ⊗)
Handstand (HSP): →+⊙+△ - HSP
Lunging Brush Fire: →, →+⊗ (Notes 1 and 2)
Back Summy: →, →+⊙
Back Summy-Fire Kick: →, →+⊙, ⊗ RLX
Back Summy-High Thrust: →, →+⊙, ⊙ RLX
Boomerang: →, →+⊗+⊙ BNc
Elbow Sting: ↘+⊙
Elbow Uppercut: ↘+△
Toe Tap: ↘+⊗ HSP
Kneecap Crusher: ↘+⊙
Freak Show: ↘+⊗+⊙
Knee Thruster: ←+⊗
Leg Whip: ←+⊙ DS (Note 1)
Leg Whip-Thing Bikini: ←+⊙, ⊗, ⊗
Leg Whip-Low Kick: ←+⊙, ⊗, ⊙ (Note 1)
Leg Whip-Needle: ←+⊙, ⊗, ⊙, ⊙+△
Leg Whip-Hammerhead: ←+⊙, ⊗, ⊙, ⊙+△, ⊙+△
Leg Whip-Low Kicks: ←+⊙, ⊗, ⊙, ⊙ (Note 1)
Leg Whip-Mars Attack: ←+⊙, ⊙ (Note 2)
Leg Whip-Mars Attack: ←+⊙, ⊙, ⊗+⊙
Weed Whacker: ↙+⊗ (Note 1)
Bushwhacker: ↙+⊗, ⊗
Shin Cutter: ↙+⊗, ⊙ (Note 1)
Cross Cutter: ↙+⊗, ⊙, ⊙ (Note 1)
Cut Cross Needle: ↙+⊗, ⊙, ⊙+△
Cut Cross Hammerhead: ↙+⊗, ⊙, ⊙+△, ⊙+△
Bushwacker-Hot Plate: ↙+⊗, N+⊗ (Note 1)
Cutting Leg Whipper: ↙+⊗, N+⊙ (Note 4)
Barbed Wire: ↙+⊙ (⊙...)
Barbed Wire-Handstand: ↙+⊙ (⊙...) ←+⊙ HSP
Roundhouse: [↑_↗]+⊙
Fire Kick: [↑_↗]+⊗+⊙ (Note 2)
1) Backflip: ↑, ↖, ←
2) Handstand: ~→ - HSP

MOVES FROM HANDSTAND POSITION (HSP)

Handstand Walking: ⇨
Regular Stance: ←
Handstand Tilt Away: ↑
Handstand Tilt Near: ↓
Rotator: [↑_↓][⊗_⊙]
1) Perch: ↓
2) Flop Kick: ⊗+⊙ - HSP
Flop Right: ⊙
Calypso: ⊙, ⊗, ⊗
Flop Left: △
Circus: △, ⊙ (Note 1)
Carnival: △, ⊙, ⊗
Giant Step: ⊗ - RLX
Psyche Out: ⊗~← - HSP
Slippery Kick: ⊗~⊙ - RLX (Notes 1 and 3)
Helicopter: ⊙ - HSP
Circle Sit: ⊙, ⊗+⊙ - RLX (Notes 1 and 3)
Slice Kick: ↑+[⊗_⊙] - HSP (Note 2)
Hot Plate Special: ←+⊗ RLX (Note 1)

MOVES DURING REWINDER
(DURING REWINDER OR SIDE STEP)

Hand Slaps: ⊙+△
Mirage: ⊙+△~⊗
Island Mirage: ⊙+△, ⊗ - HSP
Cruncher: △
Hot Plate Special: ⊗ - RLX (Note 1)
1) Swirl Kick: ⊙ (Note 1)
2) Spinner: ⊗
2) Handspring: ⊗+⊙ (Notes 1 and 2)
Wheel: ⊗+⊙
Sau Paulo Special: ⊗+⊙(x3), ↗+⊗+⊙
Chop Down: ↑+⊗
Chop Down-Freak Show: ↑+⊗, ⊗
Chop Down-Take Down: ↑+⊗, ↓+⊗
Chop Down-Kick Out: ↑+⊗, ⊗+⊙ - RLX

MOVES FROM RELAXED POSITION (RLX)

Low Header: ⊙+△
Hammerhead: ⊙+△, ⊙+△
Rio Delight: ⊗, ⊙
Scoop Up Kick: ⊗~⊙
Back Handspring Kick: ⊗+⊙
Fake Handspring: ⊗+⊙~← - HSP
Low Stinger Combo: ⊙, ⊗+⊙ (Note 1)
Twister-Handstand: ⊙~⊗ - HSP
Twister-Slippery Kick: ⊙~⊗, ⊗+⊙ RLX (Notes 1 and 3)

UNBLOCKABLES

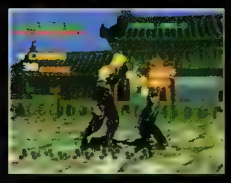
1) Fruit Picker: ↙+⊗+⊙ {!}
2) Picker Cancel: ←, ←

Note 1 - Holding back puts Eddy into HSP.
Note 2 - Holding down puts Eddy into RLX.
Note 3 - Can link directly into Slippery Kick series.
Note 4 - Can link directly into any of the Leg Whip series.

Combos

Combos (or combinations) are a very important part of attacking, especially in more advanced play. By definition in fighting game terms, a "combo" is a string of moves which are unblockable after the first hit. You should have a number of different combos to use for different situations that you come across during a bout.

To try to keep combo damage within reason, Namco have designed the game so that consecutive hits within a 'true' combo do less damage than if the move(s) had actually hit outside of the combo. The damage modifiers for a combo basically follow the rule of: first = 100%(+); second = 80%; third-final = 50%. The first hit within a combo always inflicts full damage. The second hit inflicts 80% of its normal damage. Any hit after the second hit in a combo will inflict 50% damage, which is why it's important to keep combos going for as long as possible.



HWOARANG

Power: 8/10
Speed: 9/10
Appearance: 9/10
Special moves: 3/10
Ease to use: 9/10
Ease to master: 5/10

SPECIAL CONVENTIONS

LFF – Left Foot Forward (Basic Stance)
RFF – Right Foot Forward
LFL – Left Flamingo (Left Foot In Air)
RFL – Right Flamingo (Right Foot In Air)

GRAPPLING TECHNIQUES

Headache: ⓟ+ⓚ
Human Cannonball: ⓚ+ⓟ
Door Mat: QCB+ⓚ
Leg Hook: ↓, ↙+ⓟ+ⓚ
Roll and Choke: →, →+ⓚ

SPECIAL MOVES MOVES FROM LEFT FOOT FORWARD STANCE (LFF)
Disrespect: ⓟ+ⓚ - BK
Stance Change: ⓚ+ⓟ – RFF
Slice And Dice: ⓟ, ⓟ, ⓚ
Home Surgery: ⓟ, ⓟ, ⓚ, ⓚ
Rejected: ⓟ, ⓚ, ⓚ
Rejection: ⓟ, ⓚ, ⓟ
Machine Gun Kicks High: ⓚ, ⓚ, ⓚ, ⓚ – GS
Disorderly Conduct: ⓚ, ⓚ, ⓟ[⇨] - RFL [LFF]
Party Hearty: ⓚ, ⓚ, ⓚ, ⓟ[⇨] - RFL [LFF]
Rock Your World: ⓚ, ⓚ, ⓟ, ⓟ - RFF
Total Outrage: ⓚ, ⓚ, ⓚ, ⓟ, ⓟ - RFF
Menace: ⓚ, ⓚ, ↓+ⓚ
Menace To Society: ⓚ, ⓚ, ↓+ⓚ, ⓟ[⇨] - RFL [LFF]
Menace To Society Dbl: ⓚ, ⓚ, ↓+ⓚ, ⓟ, ⓟ – RFF
Flying Eagle: ⓚ~ⓟ
Axe Murderer: ⓟ, ⓚ

Hot Feet: ⓟ, ⓟ, ⓟ, ⓟ – TS
Toe Jam: ⓟ, ⓟ
Rude Boy: ⓟ, →+ⓚ
Hard Rocker: ⓟ, →+ⓟ
Kitchen Sink: ⓟ, ⓟ, ←+ⓟ
Da Bomb: ⓟ, ⓟ, →+ⓟ
Blizzard Kicks: ⓟ, ⓟ, ⓟ, ⓚ
Rusty Knife: →+Ⓐ – RFF
Left Flamingo Feint: →+ⓚ, N – LFL
Ecoli: [→+_→, N, ↓, ↘]+ⓚ~ⓚ
Doggie Lift: →+ⓟ – RFL
Grand Theft: →+ⓟ, ⓟ - RFF
Spiral Tap: →, →+ⓚ - RFF
Torpedo Kick: →, →+ⓟ – OB
Body Blow: ↘+ⓟ+Ⓐ
Public Enemy: ↘+ⓚ, ⓟ
Reverse Shot: ←+Ⓐ
Nose Bleeder-Right: ←+ⓟ – OS RFF
Firecracker: ↓+ⓟ, ⓟ
Crippler: ↙+ⓟ – OSc
Repeater: ↙+ⓟ~ⓟ
Sky Rocket: →, N, ↓, ↘+ⓟ
Jump Kick: ↑+ⓚ – LFL
Hunting Hawk: ↗+ⓚ, ⓟ, ⓚ – GS
Tsunami Kick: WS+ⓟ, ⓟ – RFF
Low Parry: [↓_↙]+[ⓟ+ⓚ_Ⓐ+ⓟ]

MOVES FROM RIGHT FOOT FORWARD STANCE (RFF)
Disrespect: ⓟ+Ⓐ – BK
Stance Change: ⓚ+ⓟ - LFF
Big Fists: Ⓐ, ⓟ, ⓟ - LFF
Ecoli: ⓚ, ⓚ - TS LFF
Backlash: ⓚ~ⓟ – TS LFF
Chainsaw Kick: ⓟ, ⓚ
Cheap Shot: →+ⓚ – LFL
Cheap Shot-R-Treat: →+ⓚ, ⇦
Bad Dancer: →+ⓚ, ⓚ
Grand Theft: →+ⓟ~ⓟ

Rip-Off: →, →+ⓚ - GS
Screw Kick: →, →+ⓟ~ⓚ - GS
Nose Bleeder-Left: ←+ⓚ – OS LFF
Misdemeanor: ←+ⓟ - S

MOVES FROM LEFT FLAMINGO STANCE (LFL)
Flamingo Sidestep: ↑_↓
Flamingo Steppin': →
Flamingo Back Dash: ←
Rocket Launcher: ⓚ, ⓚ, ⓚ - GS
Cannon Kicks: ⓚ, ⓚ, ⓟ[⇨] - RFL [LFF]
Kick Combo: ⓚ, ⓚ, ⓟ, ⓟ
Jump Kick: ⓟ RFL
Left Snap Kick: →+ⓚ
Snap Spin Kick: ←+ⓚ GS
Left Cutter: ↙+ⓚ
Right Cutter: ↙+ⓟ

MOVES FROM RIGHT FLAMINGO STANCE (RFL)
Flamingo Sidestep: ↑_↓
Flamingo Steppin': →
Flamingo Back Dash: ←
Jump Kick: ⓚ – FL
Super Right: ⓟ – DSc RFF
Right Snap Kick: →+ⓟ
Snap Spin Kick: ←+ⓟ - GS
Left Cutter: ↙+ⓚ
Right Cutter: ↙+ⓟ

UNBLOCKABLES

1) Power Blast: ⓟ+ⓟ
2) Blast Cancel: ←, ← - LFF
1) Dynamite Heel: ↙+ⓚ+ⓟ {!}
2) Dynamite Cancel: ←, ← – LFL

KUMA / PANDA

Power: 10/10
Speed: 2/10
Appearance: 9/10
Special moves: 3/10
Ease to use: 7/10
Ease to master: 6/10

GRAPPLING TECHNIQUES

Bear Bite: ⓟ+ⓚ
Bear Hug: Ⓐ+ⓟ
Stonehead: →, →+ⓟ+ⓟ
Circus Roll: HCB, →+ⓟ+Ⓐ – £££

SPECIAL MOVES

Bear Hammer: ⓟ, ⓟ, ⓟ
Jab-Elbow-Hammer: Ⓐ, ⓟ, Ⓐ
Overhead Smash: ⓟ+Ⓐ
Double Hammer: ⓟ+Ⓐ, ⓟ+Ⓐ
1) Sit: ⓚ+ⓟ
2) Sit Punches-Left: ⓟ, Ⓐ, ⓟ, Ⓐ
2) Sit Punches-Right: Ⓐ, ⓟ, Ⓐ, ⓟ

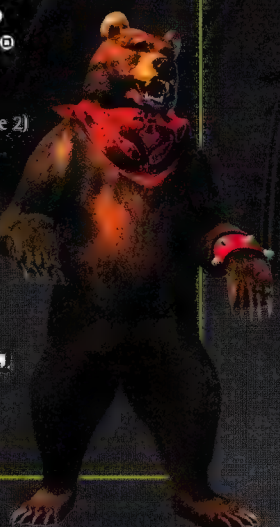
G-Clef Cannon: →+ⓟ, ⓟ, ⓟ
Demon Uppercut: →, →+Ⓐ
Double Claw: [⇨_→, →]+ⓟ+Ⓐ – CS
Leaping Side Kicks: →, →, →+ⓚ GS
Rushing Uppercut-Left: ↘+ⓟ, Ⓐ, ⓟ, Ⓐ
Rushing Uppercut-Right: ↘+Ⓐ, ⓟ, Ⓐ, ⓟ
Salmon Fishing: ←, →+ⓟ+ⓟ
Grizzly Claw: ←, ↙, ↓, ↘+Ⓐ
Pancake Press: ↗+ⓚ+ⓟ
Killing Uppercut: WS+ⓟ
Uppercut-Grizzly Claw: WS+ⓟ, Ⓐ
Batter Up: WS+ⓟ+Ⓐ
Batter Up-Smash: WS+ⓟ+Ⓐ, ⓟ+Ⓐ
Windmill Punches: FC, ↘+ⓟ, Ⓐ, ⓟ, ⓟ GS CS
Rushing Uppercut: FC, ↘+Ⓐ, ⓟ, Ⓐ
Hammer Rush-High: FC, ↘+Ⓐ, →+ⓟ
Hammer Rush-Mid: FC, ↘+Ⓐ, ↘+ⓟ
Hammer Rush-Low: FC, ↘+Ⓐ, ↓+ⓟ
Hammer Rush-High: FC, ↘+ⓟ, Ⓐ, →+ⓟ
Hammer Rush-Mid: FC, ↘+ⓟ, Ⓐ, ↘+ⓟ
Hammer Rush-Low: FC, ↘+ⓟ, Ⓐ, ↓+ⓟ

Sweep Rush-High: FC, ⓟ, ⓟ, ⓟ, Ⓐ, →+ⓟ
Sweep Rush-Mid: FC, ⓟ, ⓟ, ⓟ, Ⓐ, ↘+ⓟ
Sweep Rush-Low: FC, ⓟ, ⓟ, ⓟ, Ⓐ, ↓+ⓟ
1) Wake-up Hammer: KND, D+ⓟ+Ⓐ
2) Sit Punches-Left: ⓟ, Ⓐ, ⓟ, Ⓐ
2) Sit Punches-Right: Ⓐ, ⓟ, Ⓐ, ⓟ
No Problem: ⓟ+ⓟ+ⓚ
Dance: ↓+ⓟ (Note 1)
Rolling Bear: ←+ⓟ+Ⓐ, 360 (Note 2)

UNBLOCKABLES

Terrible Claw: ←+ⓟ+Ⓐ – CS
Fatal Wind: ←, ←+Ⓐ+ⓚ+ⓟ

Note 1 - Only works if initiated whilst your opponent is downed.
Note 2 - 360 in this case, means →, ↘, ↓, ↙, ←, ↖, ↑, ↗.



ANNA WILLIAMS

Power: 6/10
Speed: 9/10
Appearance: 9/10
Special moves: 7/10
Ease to use: 5/10
Ease to master: 3/10

GRAPPLING TECHNIQUES

Arm Turn: ⓓ+⊗
Lifting Toss: Ⓐ+⊙
Neck Throw: ↗+ⓓ+Ⓐ
Embracing Elbow: ↘, ↘+ⓓ - £££

SPECIAL MOVES

Bermuda Triangle: ⓓ, Ⓐ, ⊙ - GS
Mini Snake-Feint: SS ⓓ, Ⓐ, ⓓ, ⊙, Ⓐ[⇧_⇩] - GS
Quick Snake Mid: ⓓ, Ⓐ, ⓓ, ⊙, Ⓐ, ⊗ - GS
Quick Snake Low: ⓓ, Ⓐ, ⓓ, ⊙, Ⓐ, ⊙ - GS
Quick Snake Grabber: ⓓ, Ⓐ, ⓓ, ⊙, Ⓐ, ↗+⊗ GS
PDK Quick Combo: ⓓ, ⊙
Double Punch-DK Combo: Ⓐ, ⓓ, ⊙
Punch-Anna Bomb: Ⓐ, →+ⓓ+Ⓐ
PK Combo: Ⓐ, ⊗
PDK Combo: Ⓐ, ↓+⊗
Cross-Roundhouse: Ⓐ, ⊙
Left-Right HK: ⊗, ⊙
High Kick-Low Kick: ⊙, ⊗
Toe Kick Quick: [↓+_FC]ⓓ, N+⊙
Toe Kick: [↓+_FC]Ⓐ, ⊙
Low Kick-Upper: [↓+_FC]⊗, Ⓐ
Left LK-Right HK: [↓+_FC]⊗, N+⊙
Right LK-Backhand Chop: [↓+_FC]⊙, ⓓ (Note 1)
Arm Stab: FC, →+ⓓ - CS
Overhead Windmill: FC, →+Ⓐ
Arm Sweep: FC, ↘+Ⓐ
Guard Break: ⓓ+Ⓐ
Delay Guard Break: →+ⓓ+Ⓐ
Super Riser: [WS_QCF]+Ⓐ
Anna Bomb: WS+ⓓ+Ⓐ
Power Anna Bomb: →, →+ⓓ+Ⓐ
Head Banger: →, →+Ⓐ
Rolling Kick: →, →+⊙ - KND
Super Creeper-Feint SS: ↘+⊗, ⓓ, ⊙, Ⓐ[⇧_⇩] - GS
Super Creeper Mid: ↘+⊗, ⓓ, ⊙, Ⓐ, ⊗ - GS
Super Creeper Low: ↘+⊗, ⓓ, ⊙, Ⓐ, ⊙ - GS
Super Creeper Grabber: ↘+⊗, ⓓ, ⊙, Ⓐ, ↗+⊗ - GS
Creeping Snake: ↘+⊗, Ⓐ, ⓓ, ⊙
Creeping Snake-L HK: ↘+⊗, Ⓐ, ⊗
Creeping Snake-L LK: ↘+⊗, Ⓐ, ↓+⊗
Creeping Snake-R HK: ↘+⊗, Ⓐ, ⊙
Assault Bomb: ↘+⊗, ⓓ, Ⓐ
Flash Kick-Left LK: ↘+⊗, ⊗, ⊗
Flash Kick-Right HK: ↘+⊗, ⊗, ⊗, ⊙
Flash Kick-Punches: ↘+⊗, ⊗, ⊗, ⓓ, Ⓐ
Left Mid-Right HK: ↘+⊗, ⊙
Triple Slaps: ←+ⓓ, ⓓ, ⓓ
Double Slaps: ←+Ⓐ, Ⓐ - GS
Leg Grabber: ↗+⊗
Nicolella: [↖_↑]+⊗
Can Opener: [↑_↗]+⊙, ⊗, ⊙
Can Opener-Feint SS: [↑_↗]+⊙, ⊗, ⊙[⇧_⇩]
Hopping LK-Uppercut: ↗, N, ↓+⊗, Ⓐ
Hopping LK-Right HK: ↗, N, ↓+⊗, ⊙
Jump Kick Left: →, →, →+⊗
Heel Stomp: [↓_↘]+⊗+⊙
Arm Sweep: SS+Ⓐ: - KS
Double Lift: SS+ⓓ+Ⓐ
Butt Shake: S+T+X - DS
High/Mid Reversal: ←+[ⓓ+⊗_Ⓐ+⊙]
Cat Stance: ←+⊙ (auto parries low)
Cat Stance Kick: ←+⊙, ⊙

UNBLOCKABLES

Bloody Scissors: ↓+ⓓ+Ⓐ
1) Hunting Swan: ↙+ⓓ+Ⓐ
2) Swan Cancel: ↑, ↑

Note 1 - holding ⇧ or ⇩ immediately after second move will result in a sidestep.

DOCTOR BOSKONOVITCH

Power: 7/10
Speed: 8/10
Appearance: 6/10
Special moves: 6/10
Ease to use: 7/10
Ease to master: 4/10

GRAPPLING TECHNIQUES

Rolling Powerbomb: ⓓ+Ⓐ (Parry), ⊗+⊙ <low throw>
Dr. Frankensteiner: →, →+⊙
Stone Head: KND [→, →_←, ←] ←+ⓓ+Ⓐ - £££

SPECIAL MOVES

Bad Stomach: ⓓ+⊙
Panic Doctor: Ⓐ~ⓓ - FB
Left Lk-Right LK: ⊗, ⊙
Thunder Oldfist: ↗+⊙ - EFB
Wind Oldfist: ↗+Ⓐ - FB
Trip Slide: →+⊗+⊙
Crouch Dash: →, →
Jam Combo: →, →+ⓓ, ⊙, ⊗, Ⓐ, ⊙ - EFB
Jam Combo Extension: →, →+ⓓ, ⊙, ⊗, ⊗, ⊗, Ⓐ, ⊙ - EFB
Jack Tamer: →, →+Ⓐ - DSc GS
Slash Kick: →, →+⊗ - GS
Whiff Frankensteiner: →, →+⊙
Steel Dive: →, →+ⓓ+Ⓐ
Head Dive: →, →+⊗+⊙
Elbow Rush: →, →, N+Ⓐ - FB
1) Elbow Warp: →, →, N+Ⓐ - (CH)
2) Laughing Doctor: →, →
2) Mind Warp: +Ⓐ - PLD
2) Hopping Back Kick: ⊗ - FB
Panicsmoka: →, →, N+⊗
Twin Pistons: ↘+ⓓ, Ⓐ - FB
Slicer: ↓+⊙ - FCD
Dr. Kossak Kicks: ⬀+⊗, ⊙, ⊗, ⊙, ⊗, ⊙ - FB
1) Guard Break: ←+ⓓ+⊙ - KND
2) Shadow Legs Front: ~⇦
3)Overhead Crescent: ⊗ - FB
3)Prison Break: ⊙ - FB GS
1) Panik Reverse Charge: ←+⊗+⊙
2) Shadow Legs Back: ~⇦ or ~⇨
3)Summer Kick: ⊗ - FB
3)Winter Kick: ⊙ - FB
1) Gut Stun: SS+Ⓐ - FB DSc
2) Thunder Oldfist: ⊙ - FB
Doctor Scoot: KND →_←
1) Doctor Roll: KND →, →_←, ← - FB
2) Rolling Kick: ⊙ - GS
2) Flying Cross Chop: →+ⓓ+Ⓐ - GS
2) Flip Flop: ⊗+⊙ - KND
Hop Up: KND ⊗+⊙
Rolling Kicks: KND ⊗, ⊗
Roger Kicks: KND ⊙, ⊗, ⊙, ⊗, ⊙
Trick Roger Kicks: KND ⊙, ⊙, ⊗, ⊙, ⊗, ⊙
Chi Charge: KND ALL
Doctor Scoot Away: PLD →_←
1) Doctor Roll: PLD →, →_←, ← - FB
2) Flying Cross Chop: →+ⓓ+Ⓐ - GS
2) Flip Flop: ⊗+⊙ - PLD
Roo Kick: PLD ⊗+⊙ - EFB
Chi Charge: PLD ALL
Lying Trip Slide: SLD ⊗+⊙
Spinning Crescent Lunge: FCD ⊙ - FCD
1) Doctor Roll: FCD ←, ← - FB
2) Rolling Roo Kick: ~⊗+⊙ - EFB
Mind Blast: BK ⓓ+Ⓐ
Mind Blast Away: BK ←+ⓓ+Ⓐ
1) Panic Charge Reverse: BK ⊗+⊙
2) Shadow Legs Back: ~⇦ or ~⇨
3)Summer Kick: ⊗ - FB
3)Winter Kick: ⊙ - FB
High/Mid Punch Parry: ⓓ+Ⓐ
Low Parry: ↓+ⓓ+Ⓐ
1) Resting Doctor: ↓+⊗+⊙
2) Skidding Doctor: ⊗_⊙...
Diagnosis (RK parry): → (during RK) (Note 1)

UNBLOCKABLES

1) Panik Reverse Charge: ←+⊗+⊙
2) Super Doctor: ⇧
Doctor Breath: KND [ⓓ_Ⓐ]
Bio Reactor: ←+ⓓ+Ⓐ (Note ⊗)

Note 2 - Escaped with ⊗+⊙. Will continuously do damage until escaped.
Note 1 - Will automatically parry if opponent's right kick hits on CH.

GUN JACK

Power: 10/10
Speed: 4/10
Appearance: 5/10
Special moves: 8/10
Ease to use: 8/10
Ease to master: 7/10

GRAPPLING TECHNIQUES

Body Slam: ⊙+⊗
Press Slam: △+⊙
Pyramid Driver: QCF+⊙
Ground Zero: ↗+⊙+△
Lift Up-Megaton Hit: ↗+⊙+△, ↓, ↘+△
Backbreaker: QCB+△
Volcano: ↘+△+⊙
Volcano Blaster: ↘, ↘+△+⊙
Body Smash: ↙+△+⊗
Choke Slam: →, →+△+⊗
Pile Driver: ↙, →+⊙+△
1) Body Press: ↘+⊙+⊗
2) Hammer: ⊙+△

SPECIAL MOVES

Jack Hammer: ⊙, ⊙, ⊙
Jab-Elbow-Hammer: △, ⊙, △
Overhead Smash: ⊙+△
Double Hammer: ⊙+△, ⊙+△
High-Low Cross Cut Saw: [⇨_→]+⊙+△, ⊙+△
Cross Cut-Saw Blast: [⇨_→]+⊙+△, ↘+△
Sliding Attack: [⇨_→]+⊗+⊙ - GS
Double Axe: ↓+⊙+△
1) Sit: ↓+⊗+⊙
2) Sit Punches-Left: ⊙, △, ⊙, △
2) Sit Punches-Right: △, ⊙, △, ⊙
1) Sit-Pancake Press: ↓+⊗+⊙, ⊗+⊙
2) Sit Punches-Left: ⊙, △, ⊙, △
2) Sit Punches-Right: △, ⊙, △, ⊙
Whiff Body Press: ↘+⊙+⊗ - GS SLD
Thunder Slap: ↘+△+⊗
Rushing Uppercut-Left: ↘+⊙, △, ⊙, △
Rushing Uppercut-Right: ↘+△, ⊙, △, ⊙
Debugger: ←, ↙, ↓, ↘+⊙
Megaton Blast: ←, ↙, ↓, ↘+△
Machine Gun Blast: ↙+⊙, ⊙, ⊙, ⊙, ⊙, △
Cossack Dance: ↙+⊗, ⊙, ⊗, ⊙, ⊗, ⊙
1) Pancake Press: ↗+⊗+⊙
2) Sit Punches-Left: ⊙, △, ⊙, △
2) Sit Punches-Right: △, ⊙, △, ⊙
Killing Uppercut: WS+⊙
Batter Up: WS+⊙+△
Batter Up-Smash: WS+⊙+△, ⊙+△
One-Two Blast: FC, ⊙, △
Takedown: FC, ⊙+△
Windmill Punches: FC, ↘+⊙, △, ⊙, ⊙
Rushing Uppercut: FC, ↘+△, ⊙, △
Hammer Rush-High: FC, ↘+△, →+⊙
Hammer Rush-Mid: FC, ↘+△, ↘+⊙
Hammer Rush-Low: FC, ↘+△, ↓+⊙
Hammer Rush-High: FC, ↘+⊙, △, →+⊙
Hammer Rush-Mid: FC, ↘+⊙, △, ↘+⊙
Hammer Rush-Low: FC, ↘+⊙, △, ↓+⊙
Sweep Rush-High: FC, ⊙, ⊙, ⊙, △, →+⊙
Sweep Rush-Mid: FC, ⊙, ⊙, ⊙, △, ↘+⊙
Sweep Rush-Low: FC, ⊙, ⊙, ⊙, △, ↓+⊙
Low Cross Cut Saw: FC, ↘+⊙+△
1) Wake-up Hammer: KND, D+⊙+△
2) Sit Punches-Left: ⊙, △, ⊙, △
2) Sit Punches-Right: △, ⊙, △, ⊙
Megaton Upper: HCF, ↘+⊙+△

UNBLOCKABLES

Dark Greeting: →+⊙~⊙
Giant Foot Stomp: ⊗+⊙(⊗+⊙, ⊗+⊙) - {!}
Windup Punch: HCF (HCF up to 5)⊙ - GS (Note 1)

Note 1 - After initial HCF, more HCF can be performed before pressing ⊙ to punch.

BRYAN FURY

Power: 10/10
Speed: 8/10
Appearance: 8/10
Special moves: 7/10
Ease to use: 7/10
Ease to master: 6/10

GRAPPLING TECHNIQUES

Single Arm DDT: ⊙+⊗
Suplex Slam: △+⊙
Triple Punishment: FC, ↘, ↓, ↘+⊙+△ - EEE

SPECIAL MOVES

Bruce Rush: ⊙, △, ⊙, △
Rush-Low Kick: ⊙, △, ⊙, ⊙
One-Two Punch-Low Kick: ⊙, △, ⊗
Hammer Driver: [↓+_FC_←+] ⊙+△
Punch-Double Spin Kick: ⊙~⊙, ⊗
Running Blind: ⊙~⊙, ⊗, ⊗
Dash Change-up: ⊙~⊙, △, ⊙ - GS (Note 1)
Lair's Dance: ⊙~⊙, △, ⊙, △ - (Notes 1 and 2)
Dance Of Doom: ⊙~⊙, △, ⊙, ⊙ - GS (Notes 1 and 2)
Quick Spin Kick: ⊗, ⊗
Bruce Special-Elbow: ⊗, △, ⊙, △
Bruce Special-Low Kick: ⊗, △, ⊙, ⊙
Triple Roundhouses: →+⊙, ⊗, ⊙
Mach Breaker: →, →+△
Spinning Roundhouse: →, →+⊗
Side Step Elbow: →+⊙+△
Slash Kick: →, →, →+⊗ - S
Back Fist: ←+△ - DSc
Double Back Fist: ←+△, ⊙ - DSc (Note 1)
Hands Of Doom: ←+△, ⊙, △ - (Notes 1 and 2)
Rush Of Doom: ←+△, ⊙, ⊙ - GS (Notes 1 and 2)
Backhand-Side Stunner: ←+△, ⊙ - GS (Note 1)
Front Kick: ←+⊗
Front Kick-Rush Elbow: ←+⊗, △, ⊙, △
Front Kick-Rush L/Kick: ←+⊗, △, ⊙, ⊙
Front Kick-Knee: ←+⊗, ⊙
Flying Knee Kick: ←, ←+⊙ - KND
Thin Low Kick: ↓+⊗+⊙
Left Body Blow: ↘+⊙
One Two-Body Blow: ↘+⊙, △ - GS
Vulcan Body Blow: ↘+⊙, ⊙, ⊙, ⊙, △ - GS
Rolling Driver: [↑_↗]+⊗
Orbital Heel Kick: [↑_↗]+⊙ - BN
Right Body Blow: ↘+△
Snake Edge: ↘+⊗
Power Axe: ↘+⊙ - GS
Sway: QCB, N
Sway-Slash Elbow: QCB, N+△
Left Upper: WS+⊙
Right Upper: WS+△
Fisherman's Slam: WS+△[→_←]+△ - BN
Power Knee: WS+⊗ - DSc
Double Power Knee: WS+⊗, ⊙
Short Uppercut: WS+⊙+△
Rising Kick: WS+⊗+⊙
Headhunter: SS+⊙
Cheap Trick: SS+⊙, △
Shell Shock: SS+△ - OS
Taunt: ⊙+⊗+⊙
Low Parry: [↓_↙]+[⊙+⊗_△+⊙]

UNBLOCKABLES

Overhead Smash: →+⊙+⊙
Super Overhead Smash: ←+⊙+⊙

Note 1 - Can be cancelled with →+⊙ before initial elbow is performed.
Note 2 - Can be cancelled in between first and second elbows with a SS.

Taunting

This one's simple, but it does absolutely no damage at all – except to your opponent's pride and ego. Only attempt a taunt at a distance though, or it will be your pride and ego that gets damaged! Characters who can taunt are Xiaoyu, Anna, Heihachi, Bryan, Paul, Kuma, and Julia. The only way to really look good when you win is to taunt!

TRUE OGRE

Power: 9/10
Speed: 7/10
Appearance: 6/10
Special moves: 6/10
Ease to use: 8/10
Ease to master: 7/10

GRAPPLING TECHNIQUES
Press Slam: ⊙+⊗
Bear Hug: △+⊙
Waning Moon: ↘, ↘+△+⊙ - OB

SPECIAL MOVES
Shining Fists: ⊙, ⊙, △
Devil Fists: ⊙, △, △
Cross-Backhand: △, △
Demon Scissors: ⊙~⊗ - KND
Power Punch: →+△
Right Splits Kick: →+⊙
Shoulder Ram: →+□+⊙
Hammer Fist: →, →+□+△
Left Splits Kick: →, →+⊗ - GS
Bazooka Kick: →, →+⊙
Hammer Heel: →, →, N+⊙
Exploder: →, →+⊗+⊙ - FCD
Dragon Dive: →, →, N+⊗+⊙

Slash Kick: →, →, →+⊗ - GS
Shin Kick-Head Kick: ↓+⊙, N+⊙
Double Elbow: ↘+□, △
Blazing Kick: ↓, ↙+⊙
Double Knuckle: [↑_↗]+□+△
Delay Double Knuckle: [↑_↗]N+□+△
Hunting Hawk: ↗+⊗, ⊙, ⊗ - GS
Windmill Kick: ↑_←+⊗
Windmill-Tooth Fairy: ↖+⊗, △
Heavy Body Blow: WS+△ - DSc
1) Infinity Kick Combo: WS+⊗, ⊗, ↓+⊗, ⊗...
2) Infinity Extension: ↑+⊗...
2) Infinity Extension: ↘+⊗...
2) Infinity Extension: ↓+⊗...
Tsunami Kick: WS+⊙, ⊙
Rising Kick: WS+⊗+⊙
Groin Punch: FC, →+□ - CS
Power Slap: FC, →+△
Low Backhand Sweep: FC, ↘+△
Snake Creeper: FC, ⊗, ⊗
Snake Dimension: FC, ⊗, ⊗, ↓+⊗

TRUE OGRE ONLY
Evil Wheel: ↑+⊗+⊙
Buffalo Horn: ↘+□+△
Low Tail Spinner: ↓+⊗+⊙
Mid Tail Spinner: ↘+⊗+⊙
Dbl Mid Tail Spinner: ↘+⊗+⊙, ⊗+⊙

UNBLOCKABLES
Deadly Slice: ←+△
God Reverse: ←+□+△ (Note 1)
Killing Blow: ←+△+⊗
Serpent's Venom: →, →+△
Deadly Slash: →, →, N+△
Dragon Power Punch: ←, ←+□+△
Bloody Scissors: ↙+□+△
Burning Knuckle: [↑_↗] ↓+□+△ {!}
Delay Burning Knuckle: [↑_↗] N, D+□+△ {!}

TRUE OGRE ONLY
Deadly Revenge: FC, ↘ (Note 2)
Hell Flame: □+△ !}
Blazing Inferno: ↓+□+△
Owl's Hunt: [KND_PLD] ⊗+⊙

Note 2 - Perform after being hit with a mid punch.
Note 1 - Against opponent's high punches. Only Ogre has this move.

JULIA CHANG

Power: 6/10
Speed: 8/10
Appearance: 7/10
Special moves: 6/10
Ease to use: 6/10
Ease to master: 5/10

GRAPPLING TECHNIQUES
Fireman Carry into Slam: □+⊗
Perfect Plex: △+⊙
Northern Lights Suplex: ↓, ↙+□+⊗
Double Arm Underhook: ↘+□+△
Mad Axes: ↓, ↙, ←, →+△
Cross Arm Suplex: FC, ↙, ↓, ↙+□+△ - EEE

SPECIAL MOVES
G-Clef Cannon: □, □, □
Rush-Mini Bow: □, □, ⊙
Rush-Bow Leg Kicks: □, □, ⊙, ⊗
Machine Gun Cannon: □~△, □

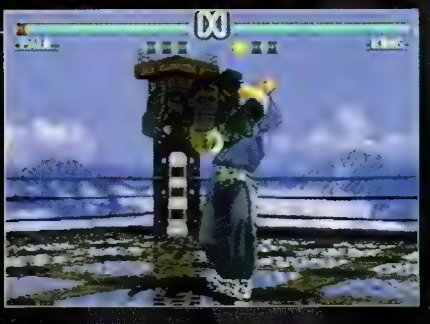
Machine Gun-Low: □~△, ⊗
Machine Gun-High: □~△, ⊙
Spin Behind: △~←
Twin Arrow: □+△ - GS
Ultimate Cannon: △+⊗, □
Spin Sideways: ⊗+⊙
Spin-Roundhouse: ⊗+□, ⊙
High Kick-Razor's Edge: ⊙, ⊙, □
Triple Spinning Kick: ⊙, ⊙, ⊙
Double Spin-Low Kick: ⊙, ⊙, ↓+⊙
Flash Uppercut : →+□
Palm Explosion: →+□~△ - DSc
Elbow: →, →+□
Elbow-Skyscraper Kick: →, →+□, ⊙
Foot Stomp: ↗+⊗+⊙
Thunder Palm: ↓, ↘+□
Lightning Bolt: ↓, ↘+□, △ - DSc
Axe Cannon: 3+5, □
Axe-Mini Bow: □+⊙_↘+□, ⊙
Axe-Bow Leg Kicks: □+⊙_↘+□, ⊙, ⊗

Mid-Ultimate Cannon: ↓+△, ⊗, □
Low Razor: ↓+⊙
Razor's Edge: ↓+□, □
Sweep-Headkick: +⊙, ⊙
Sweep-Low Kick: ↓+⊙, ↓+⊙
Mini G-Clef Cannon: ↘+△, □
Uppercut-Elbow: [WS+△_⊗~△]△
Uppercut-G-Clef Cannon: [WS+△_⊗~△]□, □
Uppercut-Low Razor: [WS+△_⊗~△]⊙
Uppercut-Razor's Edge: [WS+△_⊗~△]⊙, □
Uppercut-Sweep-Headkick: [WS+△_⊗~△]⊙, ⊙
Uppercut-Sweep-Low Kick: [WS+△_⊗~△]⊙, ↓+⊙
Skyscraper Kick: WS+⊙
Body Elbow: FC, ↘+△ - DSc
Bow Leg Kicks: FC, ↘+⊙, ⊗
Taunt: △+⊗+⊙
Low Parry: [↓_↙]+[□+⊗_△+⊙]

UNBLOCKABLE
Heaven Cannon: →+□+⊙

Counters

A counter is when you hit your opponent just before or just after they do a move. A counter strike may well stun your opponent and if not it will at least take more energy than a normal strike. Some moves require the previous hit to connect on a counter to work e.g. King's Stomach Smash into Powerbomb. Other moves may give different results as well. Normally this involves hitting the opponent higher than normal, allowing for easier juggles. A successful counter can be recognised as you will get a connection spark of a different colour.



SPEED, STRIPES & RED GTOS

Speed, Stripes & Red Gtos

CHECK YOUR MIRRORS AND PROCEED IN YOUR OWN TIME

Do you remember that? An hour a week sat next to some sweat drenched, round spectacled, Metro driving freak – commonly known as a driving instructor – and having to pay for the pleasure too. Credit where it's due though, they get you on the road and into your first Vauxhall Chevette, where you can experience the real thrill of teenage driving. Anything you were taught goes out of the window the second the certificate is in your hand though, and as you drive off into the sunset, giving your examiner the 'bird', it suddenly dawns on you that you are free. Free to pay hundreds for insurance, free to buy tax and get absolutely nothing in return, free to fill your car with petrol and pay some fat Arab and the government increasingly extortionate amounts for it, week after week. You're free all right, free to become increasingly more brassic, until you find that you can't even afford the iomised water for your radiator, let alone the go-juice to make your car fly.

There is an alternative to the curse of owning a car though, the racing game, of which the PlayStation has hundreds. Well, about fifty actually, but it's still plenty. No more will you find yourself waiting in hour long Post Office queues at lunch time for your tax disc, or Sunday morning till queues for petrol, or Monday morning traffic queues just to get to work. Simply stick the chosen thrill-filled disc into your little grey box and you're away. Now easy is that compared to the dog-eat-dog world of owning and driving a real car? And wouldn't you rather pay forty quid for a nice shiny black disc, than one hundred and sixty for a little paper one that you stick onto your windscreen and which does absolutely bugger all anyway?

This goes some way to explaining why PlayStation racing games are more popular than a happy hour at a brothel set up as a business venture by Caprice and Pam Anderson, and nowadays you're more likely to get a bout of road rage in the lounge than you are on the M25. The latest king of the hill in this particular genre has got to be Gran Turismo but there are plenty of alternatives, and it won't be long before the last few months' racers are surpassed by the next supercharged batch of rubber burners to park themselves firmly on the shelves of your local games emporium. For the meantime though, check out this quick guide to sorting out your Aston Martins from your Austin Metros and your Maclarens from your Jordans...

3,2,1...GO!

Auto Destruct **EA**
Blasting and driving are like beer and fags, only here the beer is warm and the fags are Marlborough Lights. **70%**

Bug Riders **GT**
Bug-ger off (boom boom!) **30%**

Buggy **Gremlin**
Cool RC racer. **83%**

Burning Road **Sunsoft**
Fast and frantic racer that makes up in adrenaline for what it lacks in depth. **85%**

Circuit Breakers **Mindscape**
Top down multiplayer mayhem to challenge the mighty *Micro Machines*. **90%**

Colin McRae Rally **Codemasters**
The best off-road videogame action ever. **94%**

Destruction Derby **Psygnosis**
Fun at first but soon wears off. (Good for its day though.) **75%**

Destruction Derby 2 **Psygnosis**
Slightly improved over the original but the game's dodgy scoring system lets it down. **82%**

Felony 11-79 **ASC**
Cool, if a little short-lived, crime-soaked racer. **80%**

F1 **Psygnosis**
More bugs than a doctor's waiting room, but a great game nonetheless. **85%**

THE FRONT ROW

Unsurprisingly *GT* claims pole after a blistering qualifying session, with *TOCA* close behind after a spin on the last corner. Qualification was hard fought, with only seconds between the top six. *Tommi Mäkinen Rally*, *VMX Racing* and *Powerboat Racing* are out of their league though – in fact, they're the three worst PlayStation driving games.

F1 '97 Psygnosis
Improved graphics, sound and gameplay, but still pretty bugged. **88%**

Gran Turismo Sony
The Don. **96%**

Hardcore 4x4 Gremlin
Moon style handling – needs some help with gravity physics. **50%**

Indy 500 JVC
Basic but playable oval circuit. A turn-left-only racer. **65%**

Jet Rider Sony
Don't bother with this pseudo jet-ski game. **45%**

Jet Rider 2 Sony
Could have improved ten-fold over the original. It didn't though. **40%**

Kart Duel 2 Ocean
Short tracks and hairy racing. Superb with a steering wheel. **86%**

Micro Machines V3 Codemasters
Race around dogs, cornflake packets and Bunsen burners in the ultimate multiplayer racer. **91%**

Monster Trucks Psygnosis
Free roaming, fat tyred fun. No multiplayer though. **80%**

Moto Racer EA
Good attempt at motocross and road riding. **80%**

Motorhead Gremlin
Fast, fun and futuristic with *Ridge Racer* style gameplay. Cool. **89%**

Motormash Ocean
More top down action, only this time it's not very good. **68%**

Motortoon Grand Prix Sony
Racing with a sense of humour. **65%**

Motortoon Grand Prix 2 Sony
Doesn't really improve on the original. **65%**

Need For Speed EA
Sticky controls let down this selection of dream cars. **70%**

Need For Speed 2 EA
Ditto. **65%**

Need For Speed 3 EA
At last, a bit of gameplay to enhance a new set of Jeremy Clarkson's fantasy machines. **81%**

Newman Haas Racing Psygnosis
Boredom sets in quickly on this *F1*-game-engine-using Indy car effort. **72%**

Peak Performance JVC
Poor *Ridge Racer* clone. **58%**

Porsche Challenge Sony
Great graphics and car handling physics, but only one car. **75%**

Powerboat Interplay
Example: it snows in tunnels. Get the idea? **25%**

Rallycross Sony
Sony delivers a veritable off-road treat – bad timing though. **84%**

Rage Racer Namco
Smooth, solid and fast. Until *GT*, the connoisseur's racer. **92%**

Rapid Racer Sony
Pretty, but poor gameplay lets it down. **65%**

Ray Tracer Sony
Average and short *Chase HQ* style racer. **74%**

Ridge Racer Namco
Feels dated and lacks depth but it still plays a mean game of cars. **90%**

Ridge Racer Revolution Namco
A few more tracks and a paint job touch up but doesn't improve much on the first. **92%**

Road Rash EA
Poor port of classic motorbike game from the 16-bit machines. **55%**

Speedster Psygnosis
Intriguing premise, not quite fulfilled. **70%**

Test Drive Off-road Eidos
Off-road turkey. **45%**

Test Drive 4 EA
Probably the best driving game to use with a steering wheel. Only average with a pad, though. **85%**

TOCA: Touring Car Championship Codemasters
High octane saloon car racing with the best dust ups seen on a racing game. **92%**

Tokyo Highway Battle T•HQ
Average *Ridge Racer* clone, again. **62%**

Total Drivin' Ocean
Good gameplay, plenty of cars and tracks and a thumping soundtrack. Lacks spark though. **87%**

Tommi Mäkinen Rally Europress
No. **35%**

Twisted Metal Sony
The original PlayStation drive 'n' kill game. **80%**

Twisted Metal World Tour Sony
A sequel that actually improves on an already decent original. Never. **88%**

V-Rally Ocean
Still stands as one of the best racers today. **92%**

VMX Racing Funsoft
When will motocross be given the game it deserves? **24%**

Wipeout Psygnosis
Futuristic hover racing with the best backing music ever. Too damn hard though. **87%**

Wipeout 2097 Psygnosis
Drops the difficulty level, improves gameplay and tarts the visuals up. Plus, another top soundtrack. **93%**

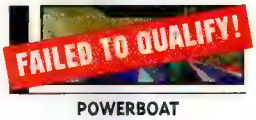
Wreckin' Crew Telstar
Fun but ultimately doomed race and shooter. **55%**

GRAN TURISMO

MOTORHEAD

RAGE RACER

TOMMI MÄKINEN RALLY



POWERBOAT

TOCA

COLIN McRAE RALLY

WIPEOUT 2097

VMX RACING

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so you know kung fu?

THE MARTIAL ARTS MOVIE HAS BEEN REBORN, AS IT DEPARTS FROM ITS CULT ORIGINS AND FORGES A PATH TO THE MAINSTREAM. YET THE HALLOWED WORLD OF THE HOLLYWOOD SILVER SCREEN IS NOT ALONE IN LOOKING TO HONG KONG'S CHOP SOCKY EPICS FOR INSPIRATION, AS OUR LOOK AT THE VIDEOGAME INDUSTRY'S PAST ENCOUNTERS WITH THE KUNG FU GENRE REVEALS...

The martial arts movie has to be regarded as one of the most inaccessible movie genres, embraced by a minority but ignored by the majority. Interest in the genre – outside of its loyal cult following – appears to have gone through sudden increases and then abrupt dips during its unsteady development over the past 30 years. The greatest burst of exposure began in the early 1970s when, fired by the global force that was Bruce Lee, the mainstream cinema goer was introduced to the genre. Sadly, the end of this cycle was marked by the untimely death of Lee. With its life-fuel gone, the martial arts production line began to slow. Further damage came in the form of enterprising producers snapping up the rights to various sub-standard outings, and flooding the UK's cinemas with such cash-in classics as Bruce Fights Back From Beyond The Grave, forcing the market to fall.

As Hollywood continued to increase its budgets, introducing pioneering optical effects that sent production costs spiralling, the Hong Kong movie industry simply could not compete with corporate bastardisations of their own brand of movies. Cursed by their self-limiting low production values, poor scripts, lack of big name stars and trademark horrendous dubbing, the kung fu genre's credibility, both critically and commercially, gently slipped into darkness in the West.

Recent years have seen various factors coming into play that have heightened mainstream awareness of these chop socky epics. Promoted by the likes of Quentin Tarantino and Oliver Stone, such leading Hong Kong names as John Woo, Tsui Hark and Jackie Chan have made the long delayed transition from cult hero to mainstream stardom. Woo and Chan in particular have undoubtedly thrown the mindlessly repetitive action movie genre a much-needed lifeline. Their impact on new audiences has been huge and after witnessing the insanity that can unfold during 90 minutes, the western world's love affair with the martial arts movie has once more blossomed.

Strangely enough, this rather erratic path to success is not reflective of the relationship between on-screen martial arts and software development. Ironically, as its movie success fell to its lowest ebb, kung fu fighting lived on in the brave new world of videogaming.

enter the spectrum

Bruce Lee has influenced the beat-'em-up genre to a greater degree than any other icon from the martial arts stable – a further example of the Little Dragon phenomenon.

His story began when, after his birth in San Francisco in 1940, Lee's family returned to their native Hong Kong, enrolling Lee in a Cantonese acting school. His distinctive screen presence was noticed at an early age, leading to a number of roles as a child actor. Upon his return to the US, Lee was asked to give a demonstration of his Jeet Kune Do style of martial art, and his unmatched skill gained him a screen test for Twentieth Century Fox. Taking the role of Kato in the Batman spin off, The Green Hornet, Lee became a household name in his native land, but Hollywood stardom did not beckon, forcing his return to Hong Kong. Wishing to capitalise on his Kato role, the Hong Kong production company, Golden Harvest, signed Lee up for a multi-picture deal. The first of these was the box office breaking Big Boss, which was followed by Fist of Fury, Way of the Dragon (Lee's directorial debut), Enter the Dragon, and finally the unfinished Game Of Death. The final film was completed using a double and stock footage, due to Lee's untimely death after he suffered a fatal allergic reaction to cannabis.

As we approach the 25th anniversary of his death, Lee has become a legend, his fame assured forever. Lee's popularity has seen the inclusion of his distinct likeness and style in a variety of software titles: he's made two official appearances and provided inspiration in

TEXT: JAMES GALE
IMAGES COURTESY OF RICK BAKER, EASTERN HEROES

Fans of Enter the Dragon will undoubtedly be familiar with this little move: first grab your opponent's head, then proceed to kick him. Don't try this at home, children.

KUNG FU-ISMS

Laughable dubbing and subtitles have cemented our love for martial arts movies. What follows is a selection of some of our favourite slices of insanity:

Bull-ssss-hittttt Mr Hhhhh-aaaaaa-nnnnn, man!
ENTER THE DRAGON

...or I'll spank you without pants.
THE SEVENTH CURSE

Don't shit with my big brother, otherwise I'll crash your penis
TO LIVE AND DIE IN TSIM SHA TSUI

Your bones are going to be discounted.
SAVIOUR OF THE SOUL

The reproductive was bursted by bullet. The wolves will burst your tits this time.
NAKED KILLER

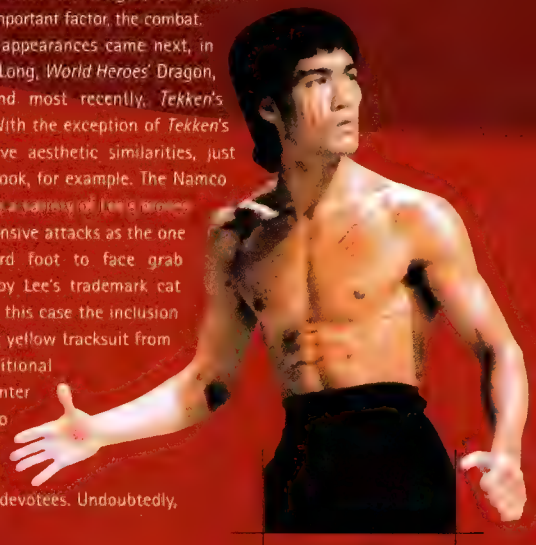
Check if there's a hole in my underpants? No, I saw a vomiting crab.
FULL CONTACT

I'm the King of Sticks – who the hell are you?
DRUNKEN MASTER

numerous other releases. His first outing was on the 8-bit home computers, notably the ZX Spectrum in the shape of an uneventful 2D platform romp, *Bruce Lee*. Since this limited Bruce's physical repertoire to a single punch and kick move, fans stayed away in droves.

Inspired by the bio-pic, Dragon, Virgin Interactive's *Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story* placed Bruce where he was most at home: in the fighting arena. Although far from perfect, *Dragon* was one of the few islands of entertainment in the sea of mediocrity that drowned the 16-bit market. Opting to follow the traditions set by the current genre benchmark of the time, *Street Fighter 2*, *Dragon* delivered a fusion of hand-to-hand and weapons-based combat. The use of special moves and an ugly game engine robbed the title of its realism, rendering the *Dragon* a poor substitute for his movie counterpart. Intriguingly, though, the gameplay offered the player a chance to battle in a number of Lee's most famous on- and off-screen fights, including the legendary climactic battle from Enter The Dragon, but could not satisfyingly reproduce the most important factor, the combat.

Countless unlicensed guest appearances came next, in the guise of *Street Fighter*'s Fei Long, *World Heroes*' Dragon, *Mortal Kombat*'s Lui Kang and most recently, *Tekken*'s Marshall Law and Forest Law. With the exception of *Tekken*'s Law, these characters only have aesthetic similarities, just reproducing Lee's costumes or look, for example. The Namco character however also borrows a variety of Lee's moves and is able to perform such offensive attacks as the one inch punch and the backward foot to face grab technique, each accompanied by Lee's trademark cat calls and toe to toe hopping! In this case the inclusion of Lee costumes – the skin tight yellow tracksuit from Game of Death, the traditional Mandarin working suit from Enter The Dragon and his stripped to the waist incarnation from the climax of Fist Of Fury – only brings more delight to Lee devotees. Undoubtedly,



for sheer quality and charisma, Law has to be judged as the ultimate incarnation of the big screen icon.

Bruce's influence goes further than moves and clothes though: the debt owed by the software industry to Robert Clouse's legendary Enter the Dragon is huge. Produced at the height of the martial arts boom, this 1973 production has provided the basis for almost every game that has since entered the beat-'em-up fray. Bruce Lee, in his first US starring role, finds himself recruited by British intelligence. His task is to infiltrate a megalomaniac villain's stronghold in order to gain highly classified and damaging information, which will lead to the villain's capture and the inevitable saving of the world. The plot hardly breaks new ground but it's forgotten by the second reel, as Lee's unmatched prowess in the art of fighting takes centre stage.

As an excuse to fill the movie with endless breathtaking feats of pugilism and gymnastic displays, the lead characters find themselves in the company of the fiendish villain, Han, having travelled to compete in his tournament of martial arts. The tale unfolds as Bruce slowly climbs the winning ranks until he reaches his final confrontation with the main villain. Sounds a little familiar? Although motivations and characters have changed, the same tournament setting and eventual face off with the lead protagonist provides the basis for the game structure of the beat-'em-up genre. Look at the timing of the rise in popularity of the martial arts movie and the development of the beat-'em-up genre, and one has to ponder the direction such games would have taken without the influence of kung-fu cinema.

Chan the man

As Lee's successor to the throne of the martial arts movie, Jackie Chan has also received plenty of exposure in the videogame marketplace, although not to such a degree as the Little Dragon. Making his first movie appearance at the age of eight, Chan followed a similar path to Lee, taking numerous roles as a child actor. With the Hong Kong cinema industry still reeling from the death of Bruce Lee, Chan was wrongly promoted as a Lee style lead – something he clearly was not. After this approach failed, his movie career appeared to be running out of steam before it could flourish.

Fate then played Chan a good hand when, due to a number of problems during the production of Half a Loaf of Kung Fu, the movie found itself without a director. Naturally Chan stepped up to the task, and the rest is history. Chan's blend of slapstick humour and martial arts proved a winning formula, and he was soon jettisoned into stardom by his following releases: the genre-defining kung fu comedy, Snake In the Eagle's Shadow, and its pseudo-sequel, The Drunken Master.

Although both of these films proved a huge box office draw on his own turf, international recognition was delayed until the unveiling of the cop chop socky epic, Police Story. Once again Chan had redefined the kung fu movie, creating a hybrid of genres and incorporating martial arts, comedy and breathtaking stunts (which, incredibly, are all performed by Chan himself). It was a sales pitch that helped launch him as a mainstream Hollywood star. His US debut, the stunning Rumble In the Bronx, grossed a huge $20 million in its US opening weekend, establishing Chan as a major box office draw.

Chan's first videogame role remains unreleased outside the Tiger nations, which reflects his limited success outside of his home nation at that period.

CHAN TO CHUN

Wong Jing's 1993 Jackie Chan epic, City Hunter, contains the most literal cinematic translation of the popular Capcom title, *Street Fighter 2* so far.

"OBVIOUSLY THE JACKIE CHAN LICENCE IS HUGE, SO WE HAVE TO GIVE THE GAME JUSTICE. THE LAST THING WE'LL DO IS MAKE A MEDIOCRE GAME AND HOPE THE LICENCE WILL CARRY IT."

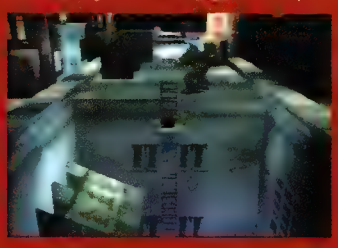
Iain Ross: Radical Entertainment.

The influence of Chan's early kung fu classics is visible in Lei's closing FMV from Namco's *Tekken 3*.

The NES title, *Jackie Chan's Action Kung Fu*, made a similar mistake to that found in Ocean's Bruce Lee, by removing the lead character from his familiar surroundings and placing him in a low grade platform romp. By limiting Jackie's offensive abilities to the bare minimum, the title did little to exploit its licence.

Chan also makes an uncredited appearance in Tekken as Hong Kong Supercop, Lei. Lei makes good use of Chan's athleticism and his Police Story persona, leaving the player with little doubt that the character owes much to Chan. In terms of physical appearance and style of fighting – including direct references to Chan's earlier, traditional kung fu movies – Lei is Chan in every respect, except name. Further proof is found in the rendered end sequence that follows Lei's victory at the Iron Fist tournament in *Tekken 3*, which reworks the training sequences from Chan's Drunken Master and Snake In The Eagle's Shadow. The latest release in the *Tekken* series has also seen Lei develop a number of new fighting styles, each of which has been seen in Chan's early work. Such disciplines as the Snake Fist, Crane Stance and Drunken Boxing are as good as trademarked to Chan, a factor fans are quick to acknowledge.

As Chan's bankability remains strong, Midway – wanting to capture some of this commercial appeal – have set about directly translating the man to the PlayStation in the forthcoming *Jackie Chan's Stunt Master*. By setting the action around the filming of Jackie's latest movie, the developers hope to grasp the key elements of his appeal: kung fu-related fisticuffs and life-threatening stunts. The plot currently pits the Chanster against a gang of thugs intent upon putting his career on hold – permanently. Amongst the proposed twelve levels of fighting, developers Radical Entertainment have included three stunt scenes. The form these levels will take has yet to be announced, but those familiar with Chan's celluloid outings will be expecting sequences of dangerous sheer insanity. The release date of *Jackie Chan's Stunt Master* is loosely set for Christmas. Early code already promises a fresh spin on the scrolling beat-'em-up genre and possibly the most literal translation from movie to videogame to have graced the market. Although he is not regarded as highly as Lee, Chan shows great gaming potential and his continuing success in the US box office will ensure further digitised appearances. No stuntman, no fear, no equal...good game?



Bunch of fives

Lee and Chan are by no means the only stars to be seen making unofficial appearances in beat-'em-up titles. The Muscles from Brussels, Jean-Claude Van Damme, surely provides the basis for *Mortal Kombat*'s ego-driven Hollywood action hero, Johhny Cage. Midway's hero shamelessly mimics Van Damme's customary leg splits, followed by his knee-trembling low blow. Returning to Hong Kong cinema once again, Chan's co-star in the seminal Drunken Master, Simon Yuen, makes his gaming debut in the popular Sega beat-'em-up, *Virtua Fighter 2*. Utilising the Zui Qung style as the basis for Shun, Sega perfectly captured the erratic movement and strikes of the discipline, the name of which translates as Drunken Boxing. The parallels between Shun and Yuen are unmistakable and add an element of unintentional humour to the proceedings.

The list of martial arts influences continues, and not just in terms of characters. The fighting styles of kung fu are an obvious example, whilst the operatic foundations of the Hong Kong cinema can be seen to have influenced the overblown on-screen action, which so pleases the escapist beat-'em-up audience. A comprehensive listing of all these styles and their movie and videogame appearances would take forever, but the flip side of this coin – videogames that have influenced the production of movies – is more easily detailed.

Reel to semi-real

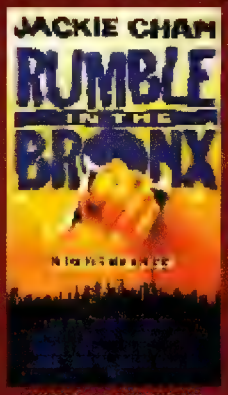
As a clear indication of the power of the videogaming industry, a little role-reversal has come into play, with Hollywood epics no longer providing inspiration for videogame development but vice versa. After the ill-conceived Super Mario Brothers the cycle began, as 1993 saw the release of big screen versions of the popular arcade games *Mortal Kombat*, *Street Fighter* and *Double Dragon*. The latter title sadly suffered from a crippling and fundamental flaw: the belief that fans of the game would be content to view a shallow film

YOU HAVE MUCH TO LEARN. GRASSHOPPER.

Readers who are taking their first tentative step into the martial arts genre may find themselves a little overwhelmed by the many titles that fill their local video emporium. Our list of essential movies provides an introduction to the genre:

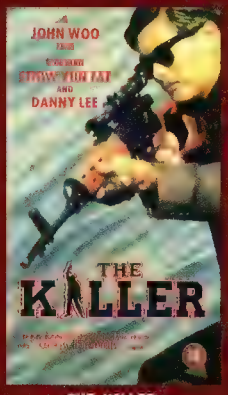
ENTER THE DRAGON
Warner Bros
"Bruce Lee's finest hour. one of the best kung fu movies of the 1970s."

DRUNKEN MASTER
Made in Hong Kong
"Ground breaking blend of kung fu and slapstick from Jackie Chan."



RUMBLE IN THE BRONX
Buena Vista
"Trademark Chan mayhem from start to finish."

DEADLY CHINA DOLLS
Eastern Heroes
"Naked babes with large guns. Possibly the best movie ever made."



THE KILLER
Made in Hong Kong
"Jaw-dropping fusion of kung fu and gunplay. Woo at his best."

SHAOLIN TEMPLE
Eastern Heroes
"First and by far the best in the trilogy. A traditional classic."

reproduction of the sprite-based heroes. Both movies' plots were guilty of taking the familiar leads entirely out of context and removing their charms in favour of awful dialogue and hammy acting but Street Fighter was the biggest offender, shaming the good name of the Capcom classic within the opening credits. The terminally dull Lt Guile (who, ironically, was portrayed by the terminally dull Jean Claude Van Damme) found himself taking the leading reigns from Ryu. From then things became steadily worse: the stiff, humourless James Bond-style plot replaced the basic theme of the game; the signing of Kylie Minogue as the once busty British Agent Cammy was inappropriate, and the removal of all martial arts until the final reel made for a movie that completely alienated its target audience.

Although it put in an equally dire performance at the box office, Double Dragon at least had the good sense to play the action with its tongue firmly embedded in its cheek. Although its plot had little in common with its videogame origins, Double Dragon still managed to maintain interest for the duration, with a steady stream of stunts, explosions, fight scenes, childish humour and a wonderfully over-the-top performance from T2's Robert Patrick.

By far the most successful of the trio was New Line Cinema's Mortal Kombat, whose impressive box office returns proved that achieving success is easy: simply give the audience what they want. The fantasy background to the plot of the Mortal Kombat games gave the movie's producers greater creative freedom, but the basic premise – a tournament setting, with the victor gaining control of the world – remained unchanged, as did the characters. Mortal Kombat remains the most directly translated of the current batch of game-to-movie licences and the most successful – is this a lesson to be learnt?

As imitation is the finest form of flattery and plagiarism has long been the fuel of Hong Kong cinema, it wasn't long before game licences cropped up in Chinese action cinema; the two most noteworthy titles being Wong Jing's City Hunter and an absolutely bizarre interpretation of Takara's 2D beat-'em-up, *Dragon Ball*. The latter almost defies description, as it shows the game's characters taking part in a series of unconnected battles with dodgy actors in lousy costumes. Containing some of the most inept special effects work to be seen outside of an Ed Wood production and completely overblown fight scenes, all accompanied with a horrendous score, Dragon Ball is one of the most enjoyable 'lager movies' ever committed to videotape.

Jing's dabbling with videogame culture is showcased in his collaboration with Jackie Chan on City Hunter. Based upon the antics of a Japanese comic book character, the movie captures the humour of the page perfectly, with Chan constantly attacked by amorous women with large blow-up hammers. Amongst the general insanity – which is heightened by the dire dubbing on the UK version – Chan finds himself battling British kick boxer, Gary Daniels in a video arcade. A nasty blow from Daniels sends Chan crashing into a *Street Fighter 2* machine, and from here on the lead players adopt the characteristics of a number of the *Street Fighter* characters, with Chan switching from a slimmed-down E. Honda to a worryingly attractive Chun Li, whilst Daniels adopts the role of Ken. In a neat touch, as special moves are performed the appropriate effects from the game accompany the battle. It may be somewhat out of place, but this sequence alone makes the purchase price worth while, as it provides a very accurate version of the classic beat-'em-up, and far more entertainment than its feature length US counterpart.

Japanese animated movies, anime, have long been home to a number of excellent game tie-ins. With no limitations imposed by a special effects budget or the physical ability of its leads, anime allows videogames to be unleashed in a completely uncompromised form into another entertainment medium. Sadly, the only title currently available for European consumption is the dizzying Manga Street Fighter 2. A multi-layered, character-based tale, Manga Street Fighter 2 follows each protagonist towards the final battle against Bison and provides a first rate example of videogaming and animation in perfect harmony. Those seeking more animated outings of gaming classics are advised to seek out the manga translations of *Samurai Spirits*, *Final Fight* and *Tekken* from import stockists.

The cross-pollination of film and videogaming has bred a mixed litter. The development of the beat-'em-up genre is undoubtedly linked to the martial arts movie, but the relocation of its leading stars to videogames has often lead to disappointment. The same argument can be applied to beat-'em-ups' impact on the silver screen; the public's familiarity with their favourite videogame games and heroes makes their translation to the big screen a difficult task. Undeterred, the pattern continues but can the mighty silver fist of the big screen beat the immovable stance of the videogame? As cinematic elements in games increase, the lines between the two genres are beginning to blur. One would hope that their union will be a fruitful one.

With martial arts stars continuing to be imported to Hollywood, both Jet Li and Jackie Chan have turned in starring roles in such big budgets action movies as Lethal Weapon 4 and Rush Hour respectively. The opportunities for possible licences and further gaming appearances have been increased tenfold – with their cult stigma removed, game developers are now far more likely to incorporate these stars in their products. If this pattern continues from the silver to the digitised screen, the debt owed to these movies will be finally repaid. 5

Editor

Your monthly handle on the changing face of PlayStation gaming

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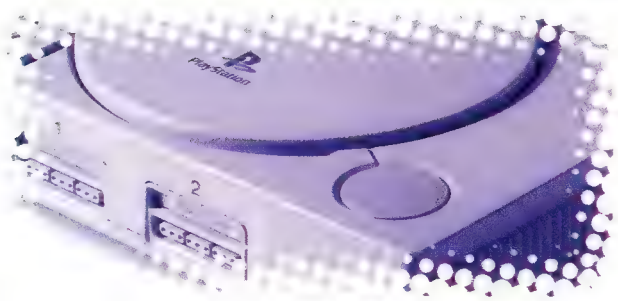
PlayStation plummets to £79.99? It can't be true, can it?

Rumours abound right now that Sony are about to drop the price of the PlayStation yet again, this time to an incredible £79.99! Although the company have already produced a cut-price £99.99 bundle - packaging the console with a Dual Shock pad - in time for Christmas, speculation continues as to a further announcement which could steal the thunder of the launch of the Dreamcast in Japan, and its subsequent unveiling at the European Computer Trade Show and the Tokyo Game Show in the next few months.

If the speculation proves to be true, Sony's plan for global gaming domination will be near impossible to halt, and by 1999 the PlayStation user base in Europe will be colossal. The European market already has an installed base of over ten million units, with an incredible two and a half million in the UK alone. With total world sales slowly nearing the 40 million mark, one would think that Sony would be happy to sit back and let the trucks deliver their profits every morning. Instead, it seems that they could once again be proving that in this business, if you snooze you lose. Go Sony, go Sony...



STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS

From August 28th the £99.99 PlayStation package will now feature a Dual Shock pad as standard.

Goemon defects to PlayStation

After remaining loyal to Nintendo for his entire career, appearing on each generation of their hardware, Konami's platform hero, Goemon - the Mystical Ninja to his European fans - is finally PlayStation bound.

Konami are currently marketing the title as an action based adventure; a rather wise decision after the rather meandering N64 game. Development is being carried out by the same team that handled the recent Japanese only conversion of *Vandal Hearts* and *Castlevania*. Firm details have yet to be released by the company's Japanese press office.

BETA ZONE

TITLE: SHADOWMAN
PUBLISHER: ACCLAIM
RELEASE: 1ST QUARTER '99

From the creators of *Turok* comes one of the most gory PlayStation titles yet, charting the adventures of the double-fisted, gun toting maniac, Shadowman. In this third-person adventure the emphasis is strictly on carnage, as players battle through free roaming environments, using a variety of weapons to deliver a dose of blood-soaked vengeance. Intriguingly, the player will be able to utilise two weapons at once to devastating effect, making limbs fly and heads explode. How can anyone resist such manic charm?

iNFO STATION

Grand Theft Auto 2

DMA have begun work on a sequel to every parent's favourite game, *Grand Theft Auto*, which will return to the murky world of car crime and foul language. The game is rumoured to cross-over into the world of 3D – sadly DMA were unable to comment.

Konami Climb To New Heights

Konami's Great Peak tackles the sport of mountain climbing, a first for any games console. As part of a 25 man team, the player will be responsible for seeing that they are the first to reach the summit of five of the world's toughest climbs.

PlayStation Prince

A stunning 3D interpretation of the classic platform romp, *Prince of Persia*, has been confirmed for the PlayStation. The release date is currently pencilled in for mid 1999. Developers, Red Orb, are overseeing this extremely tough task – more details soon.

Ridge Racer Fourth Edition

R4
RIDGE RACER TYPE 4

The franchise that launched the PlayStation is preparing to rear its head again, with Namco's R4: Ridge Racer Type 4. Speculation suggests that a Japanese release date has been pencilled in for December '98 but Namco have thus far eluded the press, opting to remain tight-lipped about the content of the title and the identity of the development team. However, it has been confirmed that the title will again be a home-only release, mirroring the last two instalments.

It is thought that this time the gameplay will put greater dependence on simulation, with the arcade style physics of the original far less evident. A similar tactic was employed by Sony with *Gran Turismo*, launching it into the year's best sellers list – motive enough, perhaps, for Namco's possible change of tack.

Rumours suggest further *Gran Turismo* influences too, such as a massive 300 car roster, remodelled vehicles with lighting and reflective mapping and eight tracks selectable at start up, with the promise of more as rewards for victory. In addition, Namco are hoping to create near movie quality visual realism.

Players will also be allowed to completely customise their choice of vehicle, changing almost all of their major components, from colour to spare parts. Gameplay options will allow entry to a full season of competition, in the form of a series of races in a championship structure. Unlike *Gran Turismo*, the player will be part of a team, so overall victory will not be based solely on the individual but on the team's standing as a whole.

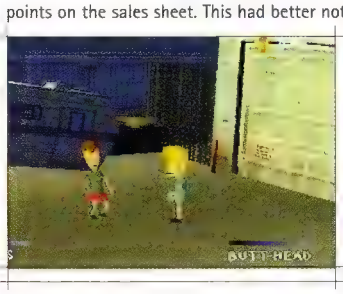
Ridge Racer has remained one of the most respected titles available for the PlayStation, whilst as PSX developers Namco have gone from strength to strength. It sounds like a union made in racing heaven.

TITLE: BOMBERMAN FANTASY RACE
PUBLISHER: HUDSON
RELEASE: DECEMBER (JAPAN)

Hudson's *Bomberman* series is wearing a little thin. So, does early retirement now beckon or will Bomberman Fantasy Race breath life back into the series? In this forthcoming cartoon racer the short-fused chaps must compete in various races on the backs of a number of beasties, which range from kangaroos to dinosaurs. Hudson have incorporated all the usual weapons into the code, but one can't help wondering if this title will be just another disappointment, à la *Mega Man Battle and Chase*.

TITLE: BEAVIS AND BUTTHEAD
PUBLISHER: GT INTERACTIVE
RELEASE: 2ND QUARTER '99

Beavis and Butthead are back to entertain us (...wait a minute – we said anus!) in another console outing for the dim witted duo. Simply titled Beavis and Butthead, the game gives the boys the task of getting home after losing all their cash in LA – hardly an awe-inspiring plot. That said, the 3D animation and character sprites do perfectly mimic the TV stars, and their creator, Mike Judge, has given the project his full support – two major plus points on the sales sheet. This had better not suck, or we'll kick some arse.



iNFO STATION

Xenogears Slips Again

The US distributors of Square's Xenogears, EA, have sent the game back to the developers, apparently unhappy with the quality of the text translation. This will delay the US release by around a month. EA's other Square acquisition, the stunning *Parasite Eve*, is still on track for early September.

Command and Cinema

Westwood Studios have announced that their popular strategy title, *Command and Conquer*, is set to receive the Hollywood treatment. No information has been released concerning cast or crew but a huge budget is currently rumoured.

Sony's Hand-held Gets Software

Sony's PDA PlayStation add-on and a number of software titles will be unveiled at this year's Tokyo Game Show. The hand-held unit can be linked directly to the PlayStation, with the downloaded software using the PSX as the mother unit.

Squaresoft + Namco = EHRGEIZ

The impressive arcade beat-'em-up, Ehrgeiz – from Squaresoft's internal development team, Dream Factory – has received woefully low exposure in the UK market. Considering this, the announcement of a PlayStation conversion has been very warmly received. The coupling of Namco, whose credibility in this highly competitive genre is unquestionable, with Squaresoft, the Kings of the RPG, suggests Ehrgeiz could have staggering potential for success.

The arcade format, based on Namco's System 12 boards – which are used to great effect in such titles as *Motorcross Go* and *Tekken 3* – places the gameplay in a free roaming, multi-levelled environment, similar in design to Squaresoft's *Bushido Blade*. Each area is furnished with interactive objects: a simple stack of crates can be transformed into the perfect defence, for example. Additionally, the use of projectiles allows players to fight without having to stand toe-to-toe, or even upon the same level. Although the arcade version was eclipsed by such big name titles as *Tekken 3*, hopefully this time around Ehrgeiz's mixture of fresh ideas and non-limited movement will see the title achieve the success it warrants on the home market. The conversion, currently at the alpha coding stage, is extremely close to its more powerful coin-up relative. The speed and gameplay remain the same, and only a minor sacrifice in the quality of the texture mapping of the game's characters has been made. There are also a few famous faces in there, which should be familiar to fans of Squaresoft's *Final Fantasy VII*.

In Japan a demo version of the title is being packaged with the RPG adventure, *Brave Fencer*, with finished code expected for release in early '99. The PlayStation version will also feature a variety of unique additions, including a mouth watering RPG mode, alongside numerous sub-games, as well as support of the Dual Shock pad.

Currently Ehrgeiz has not been announced for European distribution and remembering the confusion and speculation surrounding the still unreleased *Tobal* sequel, we'll have to wait for some official news. Fingers crossed, then...

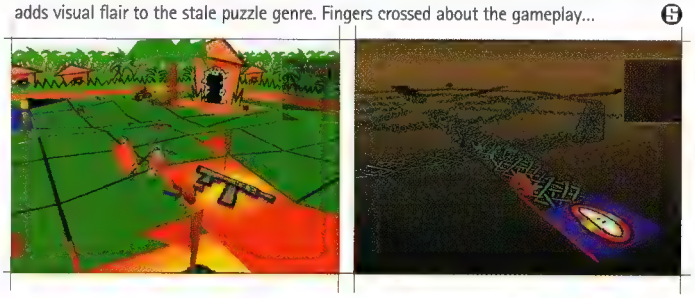
TITLE: SHAO LIN
PUBLISHER: THQ
RELEASE: 1ST QUARTER '99

Beat-'em-up fans have been crying out for four player fighting games ever since the release of the seminal *IK+*, then all of a sudden two turn up at once.

THQ's Shao Lin is a far more traditional affair than *Thrill Kill* and is rather reminiscent of Sega's *Virtua Fighter*. The 3D action pits the player against up to six CPU opponents or three other human players. Amongst the various gameplay modes lurks the story mode, a blend of action and RPG, making Shao Lin sound like an interesting concept.

TITLE: LIVE WIRE
PUBLISHER: SCI
RELEASE: NOVEMBER

SCI's 3D puzzle game, Live Wire, is a rather original addition to the genre. Instead of the usual *Tetris* gameplay, Live Wire sees the player racing around various 3D wire-frame landscapes, similar to a chess board, leaving a coloured marker trail in their wake. Navigating around a single tile makes it change to that player's colour and the player that ends up with the most coloured tiles wins. Spanning more than 50 levels based around five themed worlds, Live Wire adds visual flair to the stale puzzle genre. Fingers crossed about the gameplay...



Duke Movie News

A final draft of the Duke Nukem movie script has been approved by the producers, allowing pre-production of the movie to get under way. Cast and crew remain a mystery but the acceptance of the script is an extremely positive sign.

Fighting Goldeneye

After the awful original, Eidos are trying something a little different for their upcoming sequel to *Fighting Force*. The basic scrolling beat-'em-up structure remains, but rumours indicate that sniper rifles and other stealth weapons will be included.

Gran Turismo 2's Sweet Music

Confirmation of the most anticipated racer of the year has come from a rather strange source. UK band, Feeder, have announced in a recent interview that they've been working on the score for Sony's second *Gran Turismo* game. Sony have yet to comment.

They came from outer space

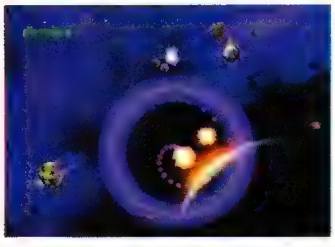
Activision's acquisition of Atari's classic Asteroids has lead to their purchase of Taito's ground breaking shoot-'em-up, Space Invaders. This undisputed King of the Coin-op Classics will soon receive a new lease of life, albeit in a vastly redesigned polygon form. In similar style to the updated *Asteroids*, Space Invaders' gameplay will remain true to the original, but a number of new (currently unannounced) elements and vastly enhanced visuals will be grafted on.

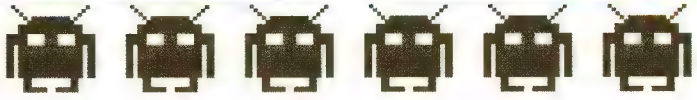
The current spate of interest in retro gaming should see the title selling well, but many will undoubtedly question the validity of re-issuing a title that outdates most PlayStation owners.

Expect more details to emerge during the next few months.

"By including new aspects to the gameplay, we will hopefully appeal to those who played the original and the many console owners who never experienced what was a video gaming phenomenon."

Ben LeRougetel: PR Manager Activision UK





LESS THRILLIN' KILLIN'

Although Virgin's macabre beat-'em-up Thrill Kill (see next issue of Station for the exclusive demo) is not yet completed, it has already attracted the attentions of the BBFC. Speculating that the horrific content of the title might cause them problems when they submitted the title to the censor, Virgin sent an early build to the protectors of our nation's morality.

Knowing the amount of cuts that *Resident Evil* had to undergo, their hopes were a little low but amazingly the censor singled out only one area of concern – Bella. In this leather clad minx's victory sequence, Bella finds herself overcome with sexual pleasure. It seems that this is not allowed (I feel sorry for the censors' wives) and sadly her screams of ecstasy have been snipped to a mere groan. It's fair to say, then, that whilst Thrill Kill will be reviewed exclusively in Station next issue, Bella won't be coming soon.

"Games are developing all the time, it's part of a completely new medium of entertainment. I take it for granted that regulation will be different in ten years time but for now I think the system works fine."

Andreas Whittam Smith: Head of the BBFC

Heaven and Hell

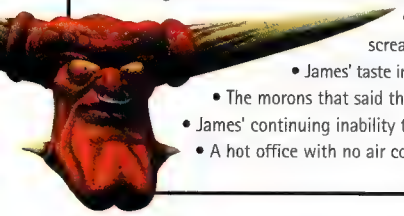
Here it is –Station's guide to the good, the bad and the downright annoying events that have either filled us with glee, or stuck a sharp stick somewhere very painful, during the past four weeks.

The Angels

- Finishing the first issue of the biggest videogames magazine launch ever.
- Pete Devery of Sony PR for sending us tickets to V8 this Saturday.
- Slashing throats and decapitating innocent people in Activision's ninja splatterfest, *Tenchu.*
- Activison for taking us to Dublin and better still, paying for all the beer.
- David Holmes and The Beastie Boys for keeping us sane during the many late nights.
- Psygnosis for finally wowing us again with promising new releases, *Colony Wars: Vengeance* and *Psybadek* – about time too.
- Lara Croft...what can we say? We'll never forget the times we spent together.
- CTW for allowing us to keep our jealous rivals in check.
- Fake orgasms and leather clad babes! Can *Thrill Kill* be the best game of all time?
- Our demo disc. It's ours! All ours! Damn, that felt good...

The Devils

- Gary and Jon from Psygnosis for being afraid to take us out on the mad juice.
- The Dep Ed from PlayStation Solutions for constantly bitching about our excellent *Tekken 3* guide.
- The office coffee machine allowing burnt grit to pass for a palatable beverage.
- The horrendous borders and slow down on the PAL version of *Tekken 3.*
- Getting our arses kicked on *C&C: Retaliation* – bloody Chronotanks.
- The BBFC for snipping Bella's screams of ecstasy in *Thrill Kill.*
- James' taste in Michael J Fox movies.
- The morons that said this magazine couldn't be done.
- James' continuing inability to keep his mouth shut.
- A hot office with no air conditioning – hell.



Carmageddon delayed

The much touted PlayStation version of SCI's gore-soaked driving epic, Carmageddon, has been delayed even further, with its tentative Christmas release date slipping back to early '99.

Although this is very disappointing for all concerned, the reason behind the delay is justified. To avoid using a basic port of the rather dated PC version, the PlayStation development team are currently enhancing both the visuals and the basic handling of the vehicles, to lend the title a more console friendly feel. The game itself is rumoured to contain elements from both the original and the recently released *Carmageddon 2*, so hopefully the PlayStation conversion will prove to be the finest version of this classic game.

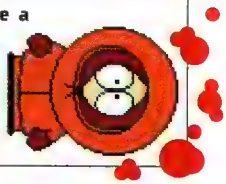
"Although we know people will be disappointed by the delay, we feel that their patience will be rewarded by this outstanding title."

Sam Forest, International PR Manager SCI.

ACCLAIM KILL KENNY

Currently airing on Channel Four, Comedy Central's extremely rude but equally amusing cartoon, South Park, has been licensed by Acclaim. The foul mouthed antics of the four middle-American kids, have captured the hearts of TV audiences worldwide.

South Park's blend of the satirical wit of the Simpsons and the bowel movements of Beavis and Butthead initially appears to be a rather unlikely topic for a PlayStation release. The numerous failed attempts at introducing Springfield's favourite family to the gaming world are testament to the tough job Acclaim now face. Gameplay details have yet to be released but one thing is certain...Kenny is a dead man.

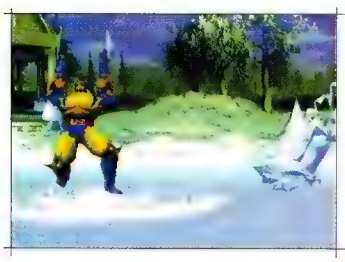


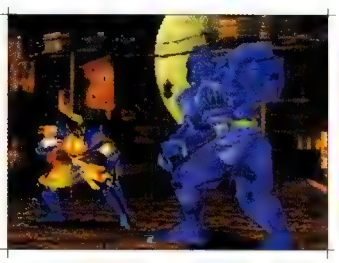
TITLE: X-MEN
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
RELEASE: 2ND QUARTER '99

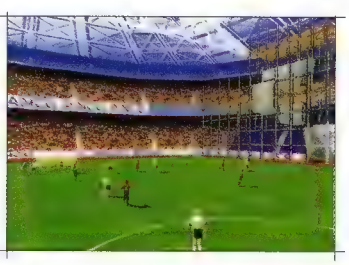
Can Activision break the curse hanging over videogames based around comic book heroes with their forthcoming 3D beat-'em-up, X-Men? Taking its basis from the Apocalypse mini series, the title features the cast of the X-Men pitted against various foes. The 3D fighting engine is based upon elements of *Virtua Fighter* and *Tekken*, with all the expected combo and multipart trimmings. The question remains though: comic book and console, can the two be combined?

TITLE: PLAYER MANAGER – SEASON 98/99
PUBLISHER: ANCO
RELEASE: NOVEMBER

Two years after the series' PSX debut, Anco's Player Manager returns for the new season. Graced with an all new 3D game engine, enhanced AI and all the new 98/99 season statistics, Anco's update will give players the opportunity to experience the beautiful game from behind the management desk, without having to suffer at the hands of the tabloid press. Having lost ourselves in Gremlin's excellent *Premiere Manager '98*, this title is facing some stiff competition.







TECH BITS

MULTI TAP

PRODUCED BY: Sony
PRICE: £19.99
RATING: Excellent

Reduced in price by a hefty thirteen notes, the Multi-Tap has now been promoted to one of the most useful peripherals on the market – as long as you have enough mates.

MEMORY CARD

PRODUCED BY: Sony
PRICE: £9.99
RATING: Essential

With a five pound saving, the Sony Memory Card is now a must-have peripheral. Unlike much of the competition, the simple fifteen block card is virtually impossible to erase accidentally, making your gaming saves safe forever. Buy this now.

DUAL SHOCK CONTROLLER

PRODUCED BY: Sony
PRICE: £19.99
RATING: Essential

Another price drop from Sony, this time offering a saving of five pounds. The Dual Shock pad features complete analogue control, with the benefit of local force feedback.

PLAYSTATION JOYPAD

PRODUCED BY: Sony
PRICE: £9.99
RATING: Good

Slashed in price by eight gold coins, the original joypad is a particular bargain and still hard to beat. It has ergonomic design and is responsive to the touch, so although it lacks optional extras, it's recommended all the same.

SOFTTOUCH JOYPAD

PRODUCED BY: Wild Things
PRICE: £14.99
RATING: Bizarre

Rather average PlayStation joypad, with a turbo setting as an extra. The selling point is the velvety coating, which gives the pad a smooth, almost sensual feel... Oh, for Christ's sake – spot the bad idea!

OFFICIAL JORDAN STEERING WHEEL

PRODUCED BY: Joy Tech
PRICE: £49.99
RATING: Good

Inexpensive and highly responsive steering wheel. Still a little pricey considering its limited uses, but if you're in the market for a wheel, this is worth a look. It's also sponsored by the Jordan F1 team, which is good news for all F1 fans.

Sweet Nothings

This month's nuggets from the world of PR speak:

"In 'real life' the average tenure for an English League Manager is short, and the life of a manager in the game is not a bed of roses either."

ANCO: PLAYER MANAGER – SEASON 98/99.

"Madden NFL '99 features 'Star Talk' commentary, where Coach Madden provides users with pertinent information about key players as they become a factor in the game."

EA SPORTS: MADDEN NFL '99.

"The bloke is back! Explosive action, nubile chicks and time twisting era-hopping that flings the Dukester, all guns blazing, into the past, present and future."

GT INTERACTIVE: DUKE NUKEM: TIME TO KILL.

"Too many weapons for a sane person to deal with. Did I mention the fun? It's really fast as well, faster than Jesus."

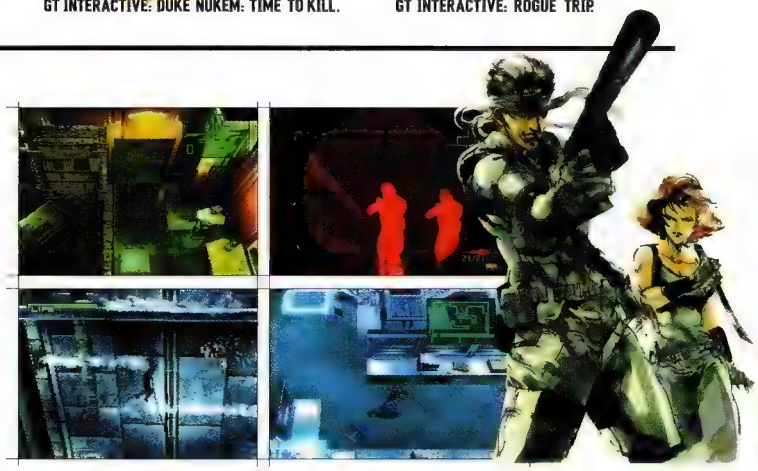
GT INTERACTIVE: ROGUE TRIP.

UPDATE!

TITLE: METAL GEAR SOLID
PUBLISHER: KONAMI
RELEASE: OUT NOW (JAPAN)

Konami's espionage epic Metal Gear Solid has finally arrived and we'll have a full review next issue. Has the wait been worth it, or has the hype raised the public's expectations to ridiculous levels? Although Konami UK have been quick to point out that the Japanese code is substantially different to the game that will reach these shores, the NTSC version will provide us with a good indication of what this mighty title will have to offer. The sheer amount of time and effort that has been lavished on the game is staggering, with minor gameplay and graphical enhancements taking place right up until the product went to Sony Japan for final approval.

With only a brief four weeks to wait for all the answers, just sit back and enjoy these previously unreleased screens and ponder the delights that lay ahead of you. Solid Snake is coming...



playstation top 10

1. Jikkyou Pro Baseball 98
   PUBLISHER: KONAMI
2. Star Ocean The Second Story
   PUBLISHER: ENIX
3. Brave Fencer Musashiden
   PUBLISHER: SQUARE
4. Private Justice Academy
   PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
5. Embrace the Season
   PUBLISHER: SCE
6. Play King Monster Capsule
   PUBLISHER: KONAMI
7. XI
   PUBLISHER: SCE
8. Kagero
   PUBLISHER: TECMO
9. Bakusou! Decotra Densetsu
   PUBLISHER: HUMAN
10. Jikkyou Winning Eleven 3
    PUBLISHER: KONAMI

way out east

Crazy software releases are as commonplace in Japan as street corner vending machines dispensing soiled school girl panties. Sadly the likelihood of any of these nuggets of madness reaching our shores is slim, so you'll just have to enjoy this brief look at what you're missing.

Whilst the entire population of the Land of the Rising Sun foams at the mouth as they await the release of *Metal Gear Solid*, Konami have unleashed their first foray into the interactive anime movie, Dancing Blade. In the game, which uses high quality animation and a full cast of voice actors, the player assumes the role of a young boy who must save the world. Spanning three discs, Dancing Blade offers over 60 minutes of gameplay – that's just one hour, folks! Bargain hunters may want to seek out a copy from the local import stockist.

Remember that awful Tom Cruise movie, Cocktail? Have you ever wanted to step into the role of a super smooth bartender, mixing drinks for beautiful women? Well, Astroll are offering you the chance to do so with Cocktail Harmony. You can learn how to mix over 400 drinks, prepare them and then serve them to a young lady – get the mixture right and she'll tell you about her hobbies. Sadly Cocktail Harmony has not been picked up for European distribution.

SNK have momentarily turned their backs on the beat-'em-up genre that has served them so well in the past, to release Samurai Spirits RPG, a title based around the characters and gameplay from the popular weapons-based combat series. Although the RPG elements are a little basic, the combat sections are a welcome change of pace, borrowing the 2D combat and moves of the previous titles. Whilst it's not a complete success, Samurai Spirits RPG is definitely a step in the right direction.

Dumb Title of the Month award goes to our Konami's Aitakute...Your Smiles In My Heart. Aitakute is a basic dating sim: boy meets girl, then it's up to the player to decide if true love blossoms or disaster strikes. With nine girls to choose from and the usual up-skirt animations this is a typical Japanese madness.

From the third of September Japanese punters have been able to purchase the Metal Gear Special Addition. The package, sold alongside the standard game, contains a 45 page book on the making of the title, an original T-shirt, a special limited edition music CD, a numbered special forces dogtag, a metallic memory card decal and demos of *Genso Suikoden 2* and *Silent Hill*. This limited edition will retail at double the price of the original and will probably set you back the price of a small country from your import dealer.

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EYE CANDY

Abe's Exoddus

Soiled underpants, farting and childish fits of giggles are hardly what one would expect from one of the PlayStation's finest platform/puzzle games, Abe's Oddysee. Yet Abe's lack of general etiquette will once more serve him well in his forthcoming second adventure. GT Interactive's Abe's Exoddus.

Next issue will include both an exclusive playable demo and a full review of what is expected to be an equally epic romp. For more details follow me to page 34, for dirty undergarmets and much more. G

Sony gaming sector expanding

The Sony Corporation's grip on the gaming industry looks stronger than ever today, with its game division currently generating a quarter of the company's total profits.

The release of the Sony Corporation's figures for the first financial quarter has revealed that the company's Game Segment – the section of the company which combines both SCE and Psygnosis – accounted for over 25% of the company's total income. Additionally, in spite of an overall dip in Sony's profits of 4.9%, the PlayStation still continues to sell well, as the sales figures in the story below show. Game division turnover for the three months ending June 30th stood at $965.5 million, with profits running at $173.5 – 26.4% of the company's overall income.

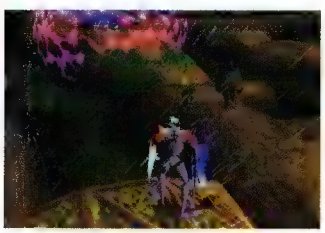
SCE plans for brand image

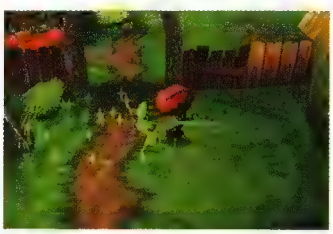
As the PlayStation market continues to boom, Sony are planning a new approach to marketing their internally developed software in Europe, a move which mirrors tactics used in the USA.

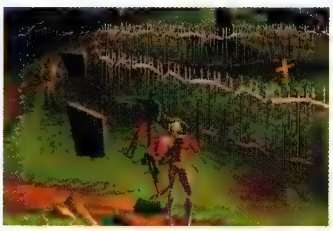
SCE have announced the creation of a new brand to market their internally developed software products. The first release under this new label – which is to be unveiled later this year – will be a football game which is currently under work in Sony's London studio.

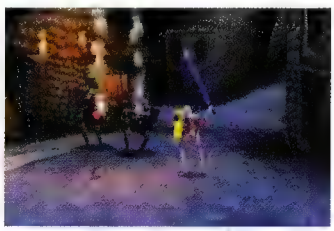
Sony's US development resource, previously known as Sony Interactive Studios America, was relaunched as 989 Studios at this year's E3. Now the European studios will have their own, completely different identity, covering products from both the London and Cambridge operations, which currently appear under the SCE banner. This means that Medievil, which is due out in October, will be the last title to be published under the SCE imprint.

Interestingly, Sony have announced that they have no plans to expand onto any formats other than PlayStation with this new European brand – unlike their US operations.









Sony sales figure rocket

Ten million PAL users, two and a half million of those in the UK, just can't be wrong! Despite predictions to the contrary, the PlayStation's Indian summer looks more like a heatwave.

At the beginning of August PlayStation's installed user base in the PAL territories (Europe, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa) passed the mighty ten million mark, an impressive figure.

After taking two years to shift the first five million, the firm sold its second five million in just five months – there are now 2.5 million PlayStation owners in the UK. In light of this success, SCE's European boss, Chris Deering, took a trip to Japan to review their 1998 target sales figures. Sony had previously predicted they would achieve sales of 6.4 million units in the next calendar year, but they are believed to be running ahead of schedule already.

The future is rented?

The 'try before you buy' approach could be set to boom amongst gamers, as Sony's rental software distributors expand their market to target independent retailers.

Having already announced plans to add 1,000 video stores to their list of games rental outlets by the end of 1998, Columbus Multimedia Distribution are now turning their attention to independent games retailers.

CMD are the official distributors for Sony product to video rental outlets in the UK, and supply notable chains like Choices and Global. The company will begin testing product in five stores over the next six weeks to gauge public reaction.

Although the scheme is still in its early stages, CMD chief, Ralph Pitt-Stanley, has cautious hopes for the future: "There seems to be a certain amount of interest but I think it will be a slow process... There are issues that need addressing, such as which stores could best use the rental option and how many days games should be rented out for. So what we will do is offer advice in a kind of consultancy role."

CMD have already signed up 1,600 video stores so far and now hope to have 2,500 outlets in total by next March.

Hasbro to buy out MicroProse

This month saw further consolidation in the games industry as Hasbro Interactive, the software division of the famous toy company, made an offer to take over MicroProse.

After GT Interactive's deal to buy MicroProse fell though last December, the future for the struggling publisher – which suffered large losses in the past fiscal year – seemed uncertain. Now Hasbro Interactive, a division of the famous toy company, has announced that it wishes to buy the company, in a takeover move that should be finalised in September. This new offer is a more straightforward, money based deal (an overall figure of around $70 million has been suggested) which should make it easier to realise.

The move should definitely be of interest to PlayStation owners as Hasbro's president, Tom Dusenberry, indicated in a press release that Hasbro would port some MicroProse titles to the console market.

MicroProse's takeover, in conjunction with the acquisition of Westwood by EA, marks another step in the consolidation of the games industry, as medium sized publishers sell out to giant concerns such as EA and Hasbro Interactive – what effect this trend will have is yet to be seen.

Trading Standards clampdown

Independent game shops to feel the pressure as Trading Standards win a test case in prosecuting a shop for selling a game to an underage customer. Is ELSPA's 1994 certification ruling practical?

A test case against an independent computer game retailer based in Harrow has been won by trading standards in Harrow. The Computer Exchange shop was ordered to pay a £1000 fine for breaching the Video Recordings act by selling a copy of the 18 certifcate Duke Nukem, to a boy of thirteen years old.

Roger Bennett, director general of trade body ELSPA says, "It has taken Trading standards two or three years to catch up with the marketplace but now they are looking very closely at our industry... I suspect we are going to see a lot more of this kind of thing in the future". He also stated that it's the independent retailers who are in for the most pressure from this new drive by trading standards as most of the larger retailers have been forced to clear up their act after a Sunday Times article last year.

It's hard for retailers to enforce this kind of rule because they cannot be sure of a person's age unless they have a passport or some other form of i.d. which without a photograph, could easily be borrowed from a big brother or older friend.

Bennett, however, claims that the ELSPA-introduced code of practice – which uses the Video Standards Council and the BBFC if need be for ratings – is proving effective. He states, "The Harrow case proves that trading standards authorities are taking notice of the BBFC classifications in respect to retail".

Next Month

Bloody Nora, it's...

THRILL KILL!

WORLD EXCLUSIVE!
REVIEW AND DEMO WITH ISSUE 2 OF STATION

Also on the disc:

ABE'S EXODDUS
MORTAL KOMBAT 4 (EXCLUSIVE)
PSYBADEK
GLOBAL DOMINATION (EXCLUSIVE)
ODT (EXCLUSIVE)
DUKE NUKEM: TIME TO KILL
B-MOVIE

Archives:

ABE'S ODDYSEE
DEAD BALL ZONE
BLOODY ROAR
RED ALERT

Plus the usual mixture of words and printed paper that goes into making up this fine magazine every month.

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EA scoop Westwood

More buy out news, as EA acquire key development assets from Virgin Interactive Entertainment.

Electronic Arts, the giant publishing company which posted revenues of $909 million for the 1998 fiscal year, have signed an agreement to purchase substantial key assets from Virgin Interactive Entertainment in a deal worth $125.5 million. The deal, which is due to be finalised in September, gives EA both Westwood Studios, home of the famous Command & Conquer series, and rights to various other third-party titles which are currently in Virgin's control, such as the upcoming Thrill Kill.

In a recent press release Brett Sperry, Westwood's president and CEO, said, "We are delighted to be partnering with Electronic Arts, the most prominent and successful publisher in our industry." Both Sperry and the co-founder of Westwood, Louis Castle, have signed five-year employment contracts.

The move will obviously radically alter Virgin's position in the game industry: with the loss of Westwood and their third party titles, the company will be left with little more than their catalogue of old titles, and their distribution and marketing offices. The deal was anticipated by some industry insiders, as rumours have circulated since last year when Spelling Entertainment, VI's parent company, decided to sell the division.

Electronic Arts are already considered to be the top combined PC and console publisher and this latest acquisition – following on from their take-over of Origin, Bullfrog, Maxis and others – can only reinforce their position. Interest now centres on whether EA will port the PC games they've acquired to a multiplatform level and how the third party relationships Virgin have built up will prosper under new circumstances.

Psygnosis' ex-boss strikes back

A whole new approach to publishing games, coupled with a rethink of the power balance involved in games marketing decisions – Ian Hetherington seems set to cause a stir...

Ian Hetherington, who left his position as boss of Psygnosis in May, is planning to start up a new company with a bold new approach to publishing games. For the first time, Hetherington has also given details about his split with the company he founded.

Speaking to the industry trade paper, CTW, Hetherington explained how he left the company after Sony terminated his contract – something which Sony are still disputing. He also spoke of the problems he felt were created by a console manufacturer owning a multi-format publisher, a situation which he believes reached breaking point at E3. "When the Psygnosis stand was erected and there was such a significant and strong N64 presence, I believe the situation became untenable." Hetherington went on to state that he felt the rift had not come about because of any wish on his part for rapid expansion of the company. Apparently, once any legal entanglements have been settled, Hetherington will be free to set up his new firm, which he hopes will eventually radically change the balance of power within the industry, changing the roles of developers, publishers and distributors.

He told CTW: "The current publishing model is fundamentally flawed. It centres on a development/marketing interface which in all but a handful of cases does not work...in 99 per cent of all cases the marketing does not add value to the product."

Hetherington aims to rethink the balance between development and marketing, giving developers more power in the marketing process: "The creation of the intellectual property should implicitly include the whole marketing process."

The new company's aim would be to release at least ten products a year to support the changes in company structure which would be required to realise these plans.

Taking Control

International Superstar Soccer Pro '98

WORLD EXCLUSIVE!

Reproducing this year's World Cup final, our demo pits France against Brazil. Featuring both one and two player modes and fully customisable teams, this is much more than a brief look at the action that the full game has to offer.

CONTROLS

BASICS:
L1 – Highlights player nearest to the ball
R1 – Dash

ATTACK:
When in possession of the ball.
L2 – One-two pass
R1 – Centring
△ – Through ball
○ – Long pass
✕ – Short pass
□ – Shoot

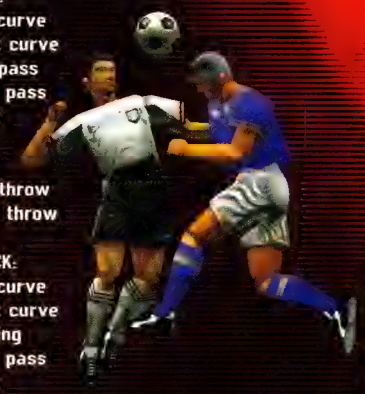
DEFENCE:
Opposing team has possession of the ball.
○ – Slide tackle
✕ – Body press
□ – Heading

KEEPER:
When the goal keeper has the ball.
○ – Long kick
✕ – Underarm throw
□ – Overarm throw

FREE KICKS:
L2 – Left curve
R2 – Right curve
○ – Long pass
✕ – Short pass
□ – Shoot

THROW IN:
○ – Long throw
□ – Short throw

CORNER KICK:
L2 – Left curve
R2 – Right curve
○ – Centring
✕ – Short pass
□ – Shoot



PENALTY KICK OFFENSIVE:
✕ – Inside shot*
○ – Instep shot*
* D-Pad to be used to decide the direction of the shot.

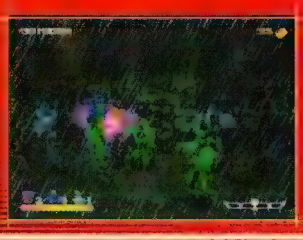
PENALTY KICK DEFENSIVE:
○ – Drive*
* D-Pad to be used to decide the direction of the keeper.

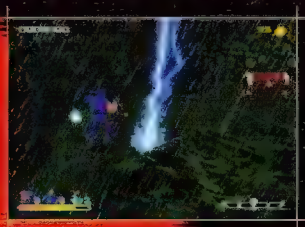
GOAL KICK:
○ – Long Pass*
✕ – Short Pass*
* D-Pad to be used to decide the direction of the kick.

REPLAY OPERATIONS:
L1 – Rotate camera to the left
L2 – Rewind to beginning of replay
R1 – Rotate camera to the right
R1 – Forward to end of the replay
△ – Play
○ – Slow motion
□ – Rewind slow-mo
↑ – Zoom in
↓ – Zoom out

Ninja

Our demo of Core's slashtastic Ninja lets players inflict plenty of martial arts-related mayhem on the various foes in the first level of the game. You have weapons and magic at your disposal, so let the killing spree begin.





CONTROLS

↑ – Run forward
↓ – Walk back
← – Turn left
→ – Turn right
R2 – Magic
L2 – Vanish magic
△ – Throw knives
○ – Kick
✕ – Jump

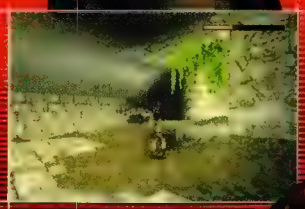
Now you've got your mitts on Station's first exclusive demo disc and read all about the amazing demos we've crammed onto it, it's time to get playing! Just peruse these two pages and you'll find all the info you need. So, what are you waiting for?

Tomb Raider

Our cover demo offers more experienced players the chance to get reacquainted with this classic adventure, and gives newcomers to the PlayStation an opportunity to get their hands on Lara for the first time. Play is based upon Tomb Raider's second level.

CONTROLS

↑ – Run forward
↓ – Jump back
← – Turn left
→ – Turn right
R1 – Walk
R2 – Side-step right
L1 – Look
L2 – Side-step left
△ – Draw or holster weapon
○ – Roll
□ – Jump
✕ – Action
Select – Menu screen

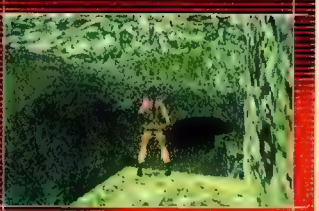


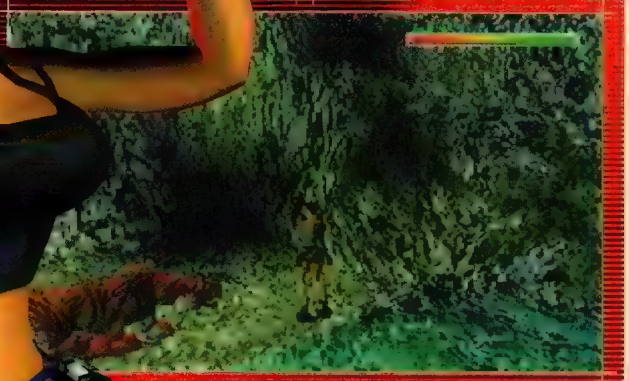
Tomb Raider II

Lara's second adventure sees the buxom beauty attempting to crack the secrets of the Great Wall of China. Featuring enhanced visuals and new moves, this is the perfect warm-up for *Tomb Raider III*.

CONTROLS

↑ – Run forward
↓ – Jump back
← – Turn left
→ – Turn right
R1 – Walk
R2 – Side-step
L1 – Look
L2 – Use item
△ – Draw or holster weapon
○ – Roll
□ – Jump
✕ – Action
Select – Menu screen





CHARTS AND PRICE WATCH

Here's your essential guide to this month's movers and shakers in the PlayStation market, and for those wanting hold on to a few extra pennies, our monthly Price Watch section could prove to be a life saver.

CHART TRACK	
1. COLIN MCRAE RALLY	Codemasters
2. GRAN TURISMO	Sony
3. PREMIER MANAGER '98	Gremlin
4. WORLD CUP '98	EA Sports
5. TOMB RAIDER	Eidos
6. POINT BLANK	Sony
7. SPICE WORLD	Sony
8. THREE LIONS	Take 2
9. DIE HARD TRILOGY	EA
10. CRASH BANDICOOT	Sony

BLOCKBUSTER RENTAL	
1. COLIN MCRAE RALLY	Codemasters
2. PREMIER MANAGER '98	Gremlin
3. GRAN TURISMO	Sony
4. SPICE WORLD	Sony
5. POINT BLANK	Sony
6. WORLD CUP '98	EA Sports
7. TOMB RAIDER	Eidos
8. TEKKEN 2	Sony
9. FORMULA ONE	Psygnosis
10. GRAND THEFT AUTO	Take2

INDEPENDENT	
1. COLIN MCRAE RALLY	Codemasters
2. WARGAMES	EA
3. SF COLLECTION	Virgin
4. POINT BLANK	Sony
5. ALUNDRA	Psygnosis
6. GHOST IN THE SHELL	Sony
7. TREASURES OF THE DEEP	Sony
8. HEART OF DARKNESS	Ocean
9. ARMOURED CORE	Sony
10. PREMIER MANAGER '98	Gremlin

GAME	
1. COLIN MCRAE RALLY	Codemasters
2. PREMIER MANAGER '98	Gremlin
3. GRAN TURISMO	Sony
4. WORLD CUP '98	EA Sports
5. RESIDENT EVIL 2	Virgin
6. POINT BLANK	Sony
7. C&C: RED ALERT	Virgin
8. GRAND THEFT AUTO	Take2
9. THEME HOSPITAL	EA
10. HEART OF DARKNESS	Ocean

PRICE WATCH	INDEPENDENT	SPECIAL RESERVE MAIL ORDER	HMV	TOYS R US
COLIN MCRAE RALLY	£44.99	£34.24	£44.99	£44.97
GRAN TURISMO – Sony	£44.99	£36.49	£44.99	£44.97
WORLD CUP '98 – EA Sports	£29.99	£26.59	£29.99	£29.97
PREM. MANAGER '98 – Gremlin	£44.99	£29.29	£44.99	£44.97
TOMB RAIDER – Eidos	£19.99	£16.69	£19.99	£19.97

CONSUMMER WATCH

We go out into the high street to talk to the country's gamesplayers about their PlayStations and take a look at what they're buying now and what they want over the next few months.

NAME: Ricky Belue
AGE: 13
OCCUPATION: School
YOUR PURCHASE: *MDK*
BUYING NEXT: *Tekken 3*
MOST WANTED: *FF VIII*
BEST PSX TITLE YET: *FF VII*
WORST PSX TITLE YET: *Battle Arena Toshinden*

NAME: Gavin Avery
AGE: 15
OCCUPATION: School
YOUR PURCHASE: *Super Pang Collection*
BUYING NEXT: C&C: *Red Alert*
MOST WANTED: *Tekken 3*
BEST PSX TITLE YET: *FF VII*
WORST PSX TITLE YET: *Tekken*

NAME: Stuart Wallace
AGE: 27
OCCUPATION: Unemployed
YOUR PURCHASE: *SF Collection*
BUYING NEXT: *Powerboat Racing*
MOST WANTED: *Gran Turismo 2*
BEST PSX TITLE YET: *Colin McRae Rally*
WORST PSX TITLE YET: *Alien Trilogy*

NAME: Connor Goodfellow
AGE: 33
OCCUPATION: Builder
YOUR PURCHASE: *TOCA Touring Cars*
BUYING NEXT: *Colin McRae Rally*
MOST WANTED: *Tekken 3*
BEST PSX TITLE YET: *TOCA Touring Cars*
WORST PSX TITLE YET: *SF EX Alpha*

NAME: Louise Steer
AGE: 29
OCCUPATION: Mother!
YOUR PURCHASE: *Tetris Plus*
BUYING NEXT: *Tomb Raider III*
MOST WANTED: *Tomb Raider III*
BEST PSX TITLE YET: *Gran Turismo*
WORST PSX TITLE YET: *Trash It*

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item
item
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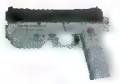

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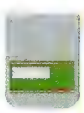

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Oct 28	Brian Lara Cricket	PSX
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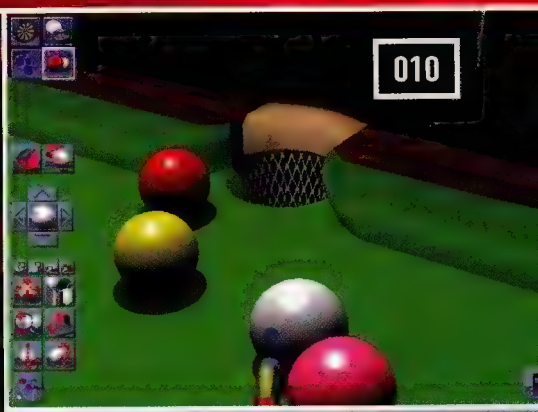

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The most up-to-the-minute, in-depth gaming news

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We take a look at DMA's first N64 game, *Silicon Valley*

008 **QUALITY CONTROL**
Our hard-hitting review system puts *Tekken 3* to the test

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012 **DREAMCAST COMES TRUE**
We put Sega's dream machine under the spotlight

014 **OUT OF CONTROL**
Meet the hard-core gamers behind Total CONTROL

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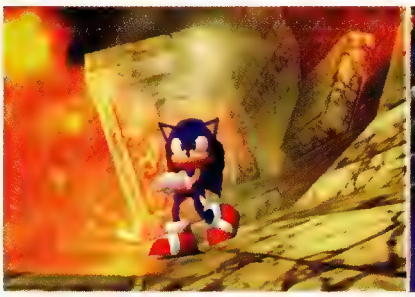
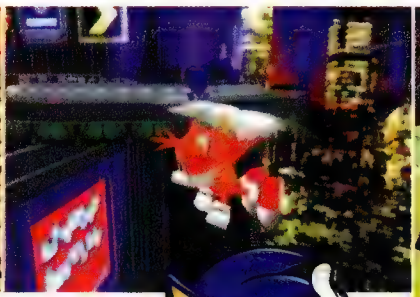
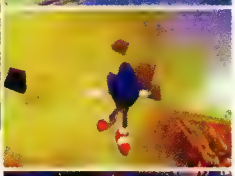
TOTAL CONTROL UNEARTHS NEWS ON SEGA'S STUNNING NEW SONIC GAME, WHILE KONAMI GIVE PLAYSTATION OWNERS A GREAT REASON FOR BUYING *ISS PRO '98*. ALSO, NINTENDO'S MEMORY EXPANSION PAK LOOKS LIKE REVIVING INTEREST IN THE FLAGGING N64 MARKET WITH A HI-RES *TUROK 2*...







Pre-rendered scenes are impressive. Note this shot of the game's main bad guy, Chaos

SONIC-KU! SEGA ANNOUNCE SONIC'S RETURN

SONIC STORMS BACK IN A NEW ADVENTURE FOR DREAMCAST

The long awaited return of Sonic the Hedgehog is about to come racing onto a Dreamcast near you. Saturday 22nd August saw Shoichiro Irimajiri, the Sega president, reveal to a packed press conference the latest instalment of the Sonic series, entitled *Sonic Adventure*.

The story centres around the re-emergence of Dr. Robotnik. He's been busy in South America, unearthing a deadly, primal force known as 'Chaos'. This elemental force is responsible for drowning an entire city, wreaking terrible destruction in its wake. It's Sonic's task to defeat Chaos and Dr. Robotnik and save the world (again).

Comparisons with *Mario 64* are understandable – the game is a three dimensional adventure, albeit with enough differences to separate this game from Miyamoto's classic. Although the game is not on rails, the player is guided by the angle of the camera – when it is in the chase position, you are heading to the 'next' part of the level. The core of the game is based on action (expect lots of gold ring collecting), but RPG elements have been included too, with Sonic able to recruit new allies and gain information by talking to characters in the new Sonic world.

Sonic Adventure features six playable characters: Sonic (obviously), Tails, Amy Rose, Knuckles, and two other secret characters. The key here is that the speed and direction of the game changes depending on which character you select. Sonic's main attribute is speed, Tails can fly, and Knuckles is able to float and dig.

Graphically, *Sonic Adventure* is nothing short of breathtaking. Levels are reportedly twenty times the size of *Mario 64* and boast far more detail. The game runs at 60fps – fast. Yuji Naka, project leader, and the Sonic Team are especially proud of the richness and variety in *Sonic Adventure*, but one of the key aspects of the game is its sheer size. Levels have to be huge to cope with Sonic's speed. Says Naka-san, "I've put huge efforts into creating a big map. Of course, I have to focus on the details of the 3D world, but I have to create a vast huge scale map as well. This is the most difficult aspect of *Sonic Adventure*. If it were Mario or a slower character, I wouldn't have to create maps quite as large as this."

"I HAVE TO FOCUS ON THE DETAILS OF THE 3D WORLD, BUT I HAVE TO CREATE A VAST MAP AS WELL... IF IT WERE MARIO, I WOULDN'T HAVE TO CREATE MAPS QUITE AS LARGE AS THIS." YUJI NAKA, SONIC TEAM LEADER

"I created the huge world first for Sonic, but then thought, 'why not utilise these maps for other characters?' Maybe I could add some variety to the game – not just running quickly through this huge world. That's one of the key concepts in the game."

Sonic Adventure will be released at the same time as the Japanese Dreamcast on November 20th. We'll have more details on Sonic's Dreamcast outing next month.

Sonic in all his three dimensional glory makes Mario look positively wet

QUAKE III ARENA

Activision have confirmed that they will be publishing the third instalment of the most successful online game in history: *Quake III Arena*. Id chief, Todd Hollenshead, commented: "Game enthusiasts saw an incredible jump in intensity from *Doom* to *Doom II*, then again with *Quake* to *Quake II*. With the release of *Quake III Arena*, they'll get another adrenaline rush like only Id can deliver. *Quake III Arena* will be a one-of-a-kind, first-person action game." Anna Kang, Id's director of business development, added: "We always strive to give our fans the action-packed games they crave. *Arena* gamers will get the best of both worlds: phenomenal single-player action along with unstoppable multiplayer deathmatch capabilities via the Internet. If you think you've seen cool games, you ain't seen nothing yet." No firm release date has been set for the game other than 1999.

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TUROK 2 EXPANSION

Acclaim has announced some mouthwatering details on their big winter game, *Turok 2: Seeds of Evil*. The game will not only come on a 256Mbit cartridge (only *Zelda 64* can boast the same size cart) but will also run in the N64's hi-res mode. This will only be possible with the 4MB expansion pack, but the game will still run in normal resolution without. Judging by the quality of visuals in Acclaim's recently released *All Star Baseball '99*, this is exciting news for N64 owners.

Rumours have it that *Perfect Dark*, *Extreme G 2* and *Shadowman* will also require the memory expansion. Is this the dawn of an all-new hi-res development for the N64? Only time and sales of the Expansion Pak will tell...

ISS BONUS FOR PLAYSTATION OWNERS

With the multi-format European release of *ISS '98* imminent, Konami have released details of an exciting package. The first shipment orders of PlayStation *ISS '98* will feature a fully playable demo of *Metal Gear Solid*. This move will not only whet the appetites of UK gamesplayers for what is shaping up to be the PlayStation game of the year, but will no doubt increase sales of *ISS '98*.

Both the PlayStation and N64 versions of *ISS '98* will be released at the competitive price of £39.99. Konami are expecting big sales to complement the 2 million units of the *ISS* series sold in Europe already.

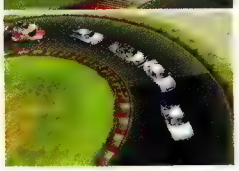
Kunio Neo, head of Konami's games publishing activities in Europe, also answered critics who asked why the games were dropped from their original summer release dates. "We have been asked many times during the past few months why we did not release this year's *ISS* games to coincide with the World Cup. The simple answer is that, unlike some other companies, we decided to spend the time to make great football games which are a major step forward and will not disappoint the millions of fans of the *ISS* series, rather than rush them out as part of the World Cup hype". So it had nothing to do with Electronic Arts' official World Cup license, then?

Purchasers of the PlayStation *ISS Pro '98* will be treated to a playable demo of Konami's potential classic, *Metal Gear Solid*

ALPHA UPDATE!

TOCA 2
CODEMASTERS' LATEST TO BEAT GRAN TURISMO?

Codemasters have released new screenshots of their latest racer, sequel to one of the most successful PlayStation driving games ever, *TOCA Touring Car Championship 2*. Apart from the obvious graphical improvements, the game boasts several gameplay enhancements. The game now runs in the PlayStation hi-res mode and uses real-time light sourcing effects. *TOCA 2* now features the Support Car Championship, where players now compete with a wider variety of cars, such as Jaguars, TVRs, and even the loveable Ford Fiesta. Better than *Gran Turismo*? You'll just have to wait until November to find out.



RESIDENT EVIL SHOCKER

After the relative success of *Resident Evil: Director's Cut*, Capcom have announced a special edition of *Resident Evil 2*. Capcom state that the game will be Dual Shock compatible and will feature brand new music and a new playable character. There will also be three new modes: Rookie, Normal and Battle. Virgin Interactive, the publishers of all things Capcom in Europe, have not yet confirmed a release over here.

ALPHA UPDATE!

Any new development concerning a game that we have previously covered will appear as an Alpha Update. Everything from new screenshots to previously withheld information will be brought to your attention. We know how important keeping up to date with gaming news is to serious gamesplayers, so look out for our ongoing coverage.

REPORTAGE EXTRAS!

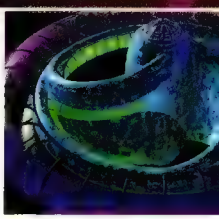
This section is one of the most important in Total CONTROL, spanning at least 20 pages every issue. As well as in-depth news articles, there will be detailed analysis of the current charts, information on all release dates and regular news columns direct from America and Japan.

BETA LOOK

Once an innovative or Triple A title has reached a playable stage in its development it will be ready for the Beta Look treatment. Although the code is early Total CONTROL will always provide you with an expert, in-depth opinion on the game's potential at that time.

SPACE STATION...

Silicon Valley



Flying dogs, boxing kangaroos and **rats with toxic farts.** Believe it or not, ***Silicon Valley*** might just be the game to **knock *Banjo-Kazooie* from the top of the tree...**

INFORMATION	
PUBLISHER	Take 2 Interactive
DEVELOPER	DMA Design
STYLE	Platform Adventure
RELEASE	November
PRICE	£TBA
PLAYERS	One
MEMORY CARD	No
RUMBLE PAK	No

Space Station: Silicon Valley has been a long time in the making. It was three years ago that Nintendo's dream team was announced and *Silicon Valley* was earmarked by many to be a game to look out for. What else would you expect for a game made by the people who brought you *Lemmings*, *Uni Racer* and *Grand Theft Auto*?

In those three years, the game has been progressing very well indeed, and is now about to be released into the software-starved N64 market. With competition from what seems like a hundred and one 3D platformers, does *Silicon Valley* stand a chance? We think that it might just have the edge to take it head and shoulders above the rest...

The story behind the game surrounds the disappearance of a space station and its contents: an experiment into nanobot technology. This mysterious disappearance was linked to a Professor Cheese, the inevitable mad scientist. It was then discovered, years later, that the space station is on a return course to Earth; Cheese vows to destroy it. By this time, the nanobot technology has evolved into many forms of life, based on species indigenous to Earth, but with a twist! You see, because the animals are mechanical they have evolved many advantages over their biological counterparts. Dogs have wheels and missiles; cameras have guns instead of humps and rats even have exploding turds. You can see why this little lot poses a threat to the safety of the Earth!

Almost immediately, Dangerous Dan and his robotic sidekick EVO are dispatched to deal with the situation. Unfortunately, after an argument about what music to play on their space rocket's stereo, they crash into an asteroid and then into the space station itself, causing EVO to break into five

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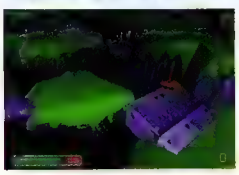
When you enter an animal you are given the specs (left); Kangaroo boxing is great fun (right)

pieces. So it is your task to recover the broken pieces of EVO and defeat the mad scientist. You play as the microchip that was inside EVO, with one special ability: you can enter the bodies of deceased animals and re-animate them. And so the adventure begins, a journey through the *Space Station* to finally meet and defeat the big boss guy.

For those of you who like your games to fit neatly into a pigeonhole, this game would probably be best described as a 3D platform puzzle game. However, to do so would be to demean the work of those creative people at DMA. *Space Station: Silicon Valley* is blessed with intelligence and wit that is rarely seen in today's "sure thing" obsessed market. True, the game is in three dimensions and has a strong puzzle element to it, and there are one or two platforms. But to liken this game to *Mario 64*, for example, would be completely inaccurate. Each level in *Silicon Valley* offers the player a new challenge – mission objectives range from simply herding sheep into a pen to live animal firing ranges, and even a boxing match with kangaroos. Quite often you will have to complete several objectives on a level, and to do these you have to perform other tasks. There's a lot of gameplay here!

THE WORK OF THOSE CREATIVE PEOPLE AT DMA. THE GAME OOZES ORIGINALITY



Only the fox's speed could get you over this ramp and through to the next part of the puzzle

While *Silicon Valley* may not be the best-looking game you'll ever see, there are plenty of interesting details to keep you amused. The speakers throb in time with the hilariously 'easy listening' soundtrack, footprints are left in the snow, and the ripples left in the water are easily on a par with those seen in *Banjo-Kazooie*.

Space Station: Silicon Valley looks like it might be one of the surprise hits of the winter. With its interesting mix of subgames and puzzles, and with the added advantage of *Mario*-esque three dimensional worlds, this could become the choice of the discerning hardcore gamer. The only problem that we can envisage is the linear nature of the game, which may cause some frustration. With only one 'route' to take through *Silicon Valley*, you could find yourself coming up against a brick wall. Let's just hope that the learning curve is such that everyone can enjoy what will be an extremely rewarding experience. **TC**

Landscapes are suitably varied and on a large scale. Here the sheep is master of all he surveys

SUB GAMES

Space Station: Silicon Valley **is full to the brim with subgames and puzzles for you to solve. Here you can see (from left to right) an aerial dogfight where you take on a squadron of dogs, a section where you must hunt down sites of archeological importance, and a boxing match between two kangaroos. Completing these games usually results in a hefty reward, or one of the missing pieces of EVO.**

SUMMING UP

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- **Forty unique creatures to control and master.**
- **Has a style and a sense of humour rarely seen in videogames.**

–

- **Players may find the linear nature too frustrating.**
- **Replay value may suffer due to the nature of the game.**

=

Use the weird and wacky animals to solve the numerous puzzles in this alternative to the 3D platformer.

BETA BOXOUTS

Many of the games featured in this section will contain exciting or original elements that can only be fully appreciated when you actually play the game. This is why you will find Total CONTROL's Beta Looks more informative than the previews in any other magazines. We won't work with anything less than playable code and this means we can use our boxouts to highlight the special features we discover when playing the game for the first time.

SUMMING UP

These are the opinions that matter, written by games journalists who know how to spot a great game in the early stages of its development. Having got the most out of the code available, our experienced gamers will form unbiased opinions based only on the playability at this early stage. We will provide you with succinct descriptions of the pros and cons discovered so far and an overview of the concept behind the title.

QUALITY CONTROL

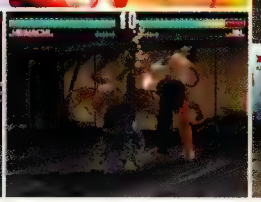
Total CONTROL's reviews will be the most informative, hard hitting and entertaining on the market. Our reviewers will ensure they thoroughly playtest every game until they are ready to provide you with the opinions that you can trust.

INFORMATION

Total CONTROL's reviews will incorporate platform specific information. This means that you will always know how to get the very best from a game, whichever format you're using. As well as the publisher's recommended specs, we will also provide PC owners with a Total CONTROL recommended spec. This means you can always be confident the game reviewed will run at an acceptable speed on your machine.

Tekken 3

The latest instalment of Namco's **legendary beat-'em-up** saga **has at last** arrived in Europe. We playtest the **PAL version** of possibly the **greatest fighting game ever...**



Even if you're not a fan of King, once you've met the incredibly irritating Eddy you'll be pleased to see him taking a beating

TAKING CONTROL

You need only watch the intro sequence to understand just how special *Tekken 3* really is. With all the style of a Hollywood blockbuster, it grabs you by the throat and draws you in to the whole experience. The first play is equally satisfying; silky smooth animation, plenty of impressive moves and a great selection of very different characters. Everything here has been polished until it shines.

INFORMATION	
PUBLISHER	Sony
DEVELOPER	Namco
PRICE	£34.99
RELEASE	Out Now
PLAYERS	1-2
ANALOGUE	No
DUAL SHOCK	Yes
MEMORY CARD	1 Block

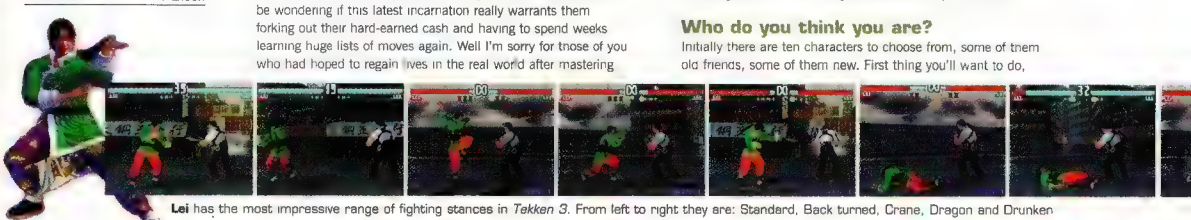
For me, the decision to buy a PlayStation was made after seeing just two games running on it: *Destruction Derby* and *Tekken*, both of which have since been bettered by only a handful of similar games – the most notable of which are their own sequels. In the case of Tekken 2, PlayStation owners were, incredibly, treated to an almost perfect conversion of the arcade game. The only really noticeable differences being in the graphics and, in the PAL version, a distinct lack of speed.

Well now *Tekken 3* has arrived, and beat-'em-up fans who have spent the last two years perfecting their *Tekken 2* skills will be wondering if this latest incarnation really warrants them forking out their hard-earned cash and having to spend weeks learning huge lists of moves again. Well I'm sorry for those of you who had hoped to regain lives in the real world after mastering *Tekken 2*, because I have to report that *Tekken 3* is everything we could have hoped it would be – and lots more besides.

Amidst rumours of hardware upgrades being required for the PlayStation to cope with a game the size of *Tekken 3*, Namco have managed not only to give us an arcade perfect conversion without any such devices, but have also stuck a couple of superb bonus games in to boot. It's true that the PlayStation version lacks the 3D backgrounds of the arcade, but Namco have done such a good job on the 2D images that you'll hardly notice, and since when are backgrounds so important anyway? I'd rather play *Tekken 3* against no background at all than any other beat-'em-up I can think of.

Who do you think you are?

Initially there are ten characters to choose from, some of them old friends, some of them new. First thing you'll want to do,



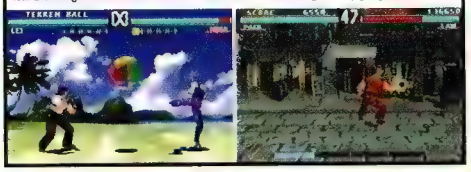
Lei has the most impressive range of fighting stances in *Tekken 3*. From left to right they are: Standard, Back turned, Crane, Dragon and Drunken

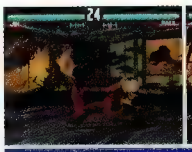
QUALITY CONTROL

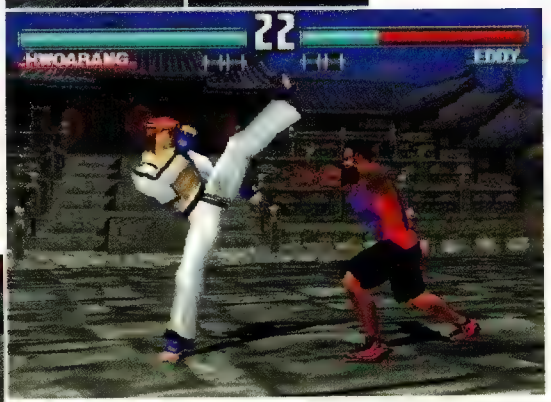
BONUS GAMES

After meeting certain requirements you will gain access to two brand new modes of play. Tekken Ball sees the characters battling it out on court using a beach ball, with players losing energy if the ball touches the ground on their side. The ball can also be charged up if you make your return using certain moves; with the ball powered-up it can damage your opponent in much the same way as a punch or kick would – unless, of course, they manage to return it.

Tekken Force is an attempt at what many gamesplayers have dreamt of for some time: a *Double Dragon* style scrolling beat-'em-up with as many moves available to you as in a standard one on one fighting game. It's not without its flaws, but it's good fun, and the fact that you need to complete it four times to gain access to the last secret character is reason enough to keep going back to it.







Of course, everybody is keen to have a go with the new characters, such as Hwoarang and Eddy (above), but characters from the previous *Tekken* games have been greatly enhanced and should definitely not be overlooked

though, is set about the familiar task of gaining bonus fighters via the arcade mode. Every time you complete this mode with a different character you will be rewarded with a new one, although, unlike *Tekken 2*, you will now receive the bonus characters in a set sequence rather than gaining them in correspondence to which characters you're playing with. Once you've doubled your character count you'll notice that there are still a further two empty character boxes, and to fill these you'll need to excel at both of the bonus games (see boxout).

Once you're satisfied with your stable of fighters, you'll probably want to choose a single character to master initially.

DESPITE THE ENORMOUS VARIETY OF FIGHTING STYLES AVAILABLE, NO SINGLE CHARACTER OFFERS A DISTINCT ADVANTAGE OVER ANOTHER

Even players who think they're familiar with a fighter's moves from *Tekken 2* will need to spend a lot of time brushing up on their techniques, something that's made a lot easier thanks to a superb practice mode, with more options than most fighting games can boast in total. The fact that fighters can now side step around each other has opened up a whole new range of throws, as well as the ability to evade incoming blows without using the block. Many of the characters have also gained reversal moves, enabling them to turn defence into offence in a split second. Others have actually had some of their moves made a little less devastating: King's multiparts, for example, are now a lot easier to escape from.

One of the strengths of the *Tekken* series has always been that despite the enormous variety of fighting styles available, no single character has ever offered a distinct advantage over another. *Tekken 3* upholds this tradition masterfully, and with the possible exception of Eddy, there's no room for button bashers in the King of Iron Fist Tournament this time around.

I teach you some trick or two

The learning curve in *Tekken 3* is, not to put too finer a point on it, perfect. All of the characters have enough basic moves to keep beginners amused until they learn some of the special moves and combos, and eventually you'll find yourself coming up with your own devastating strings of moves, convincing yourself that even the programmers never thought of them. With these kinds of possibilities and over 20 characters to master, *Tekken 3* is a game that just keeps on giving. The more you play it, the better it gets. You have to speculate to accumulate, and I promise that if you invest plenty of your time on *Tekken 3*, you will not be disappointed. Talk about low risk!

If I had to say something negative about *Tekken 3*, it would be that those of you who have experienced the NTSC version will definitely find the PAL version a bit slower. Having said that, it still seems faster than *Tekken 2*, so nobody should be disappointed.

To sum up, *Tekken 3* on the PlayStation is by far the best beat-'em-up on any home system, and is reason enough for any self-respecting fan of the genre to invest in a PlayStation if they haven't already done so. **Justin**

Face down, Knock down, Panther, Phoenix, Play dead, Slide, Snake and Tiger. Each stance has a limited number of unique moves

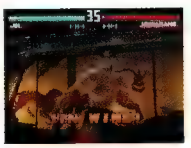
OTHER FORMATS?

PC ●○○○○

Namco have not released a game on the PC to date. We would love to think that *Tekken 3* could be the game to buck the trend, but it's extremely unlikely

N64 ○○○○○

Although a few of Namco's minor titles have made it to the N64, Sony's deal means that there is as much chance as no chance of *Tekken* appearing on the N64



Another perfect bout for the quick and deadly newcomer, Jin

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Tekken 3
GRAPHICS	95
SOUND	92
PLAYABILITY	95
OVERALL Out of 100	94

OTHER FORMATS?

The review you are reading may not be for a game currently confirmed on your machine, however Total CONTROL is a genuine multi-format magazine. This means that at every opportunity we will be keeping you fully informed about all developments of particular interest to you. A probability rating between one and five indicates what we consider to be the likelihood of the title ever appearing on your machine.

VERDICT

This is the most important element of the magazine because we know you'll be basing your purchasing decisions on our recommendations. Total CONTROL's scores will be unbiased and genuinely on a scale of 1-100. If a game is considered to be average it will receive a score of around 50, any game scoring higher than this can be considered an above average title worthy of your attention.

QUANTITYCONTROL

THE FORMATS

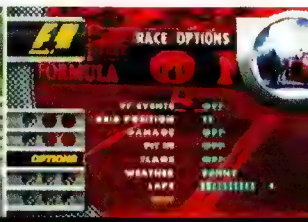
Although every section of the magazine will cover as many formats as possible, Quantity Control is where you'll find the lowdown on the latest games for your machine. The formats covered will include PlayStation, PC, Nintendo 64, Dreamcast, Game Boy, Game Boy Color and all next generation machines as they become available.

F1 World Grand Prix

Platform: **Nintendo 64** Publisher: **Nintendo** Developer: **Paradigm Systems**
Price: **£49.99** Release: **Out Now** Players: **1-2**

The N64's relationship with the racing genre has not been a good one. Despite the machine boasting more power than the PlayStation, it has never been able to match the speed or quality of Sony's console's racing games. Cue *F1 World Grand Prix* from the makers of *PilotWings 64*, the first attempt by anyone to make a driving simulation on the N64.

F1 World Grand Prix should be commended for several reasons. First, the game accurately reproduces each of the F1 tracks and each of the cars from the 1997 season. Secondly, it is a match for the Psygnosis' *F1 '97* on the PlayStation in terms of both speed and graphics, albeit with more blurred visuals. So here we have a half-decent racing game on the N64. It's not without its faults, however, the game is only fast when played without your car in view, and your opponents tend to judder over the track from time to time. Apart from this, Paradigm have made a fine effort to bring the excitement of F1 to the N64. **Nick** VERDICT **78%**

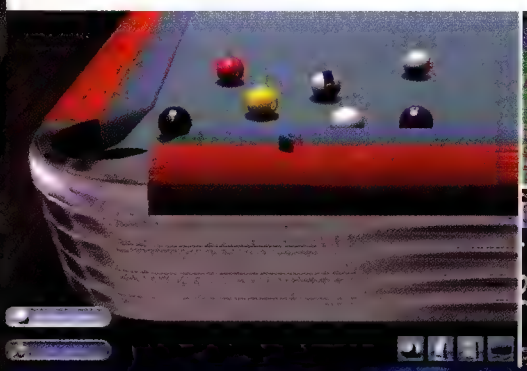


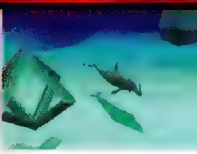
Jimmy White 2: Cueball

Platform: **PC** Publisher: **Virgin** Developer: **Awesome Developments** Price: **£34.99** Release: **October** Players: **1-2**

Coming from the legendary talent that is Archer Maclean, *Jimmy White 2: Cueball* is the follow up to the highly successful *Jimmy White's Snooker*, which appeared on the Amiga and MegaDrive. This PC accelerated version loses none of the original's faultless gameplay and adds a few bonuses into the bargain. The games are set in two virtual themed rooms – a snooker room and a 50's Americana pool room, both beautifully realised.

Aside from the snooker and pool (you can play UK, US and US 9-ball rules) there are a few other distractions; darts, draughts and an arcade table version of Maclean's 1980's game, *Dropzone*. The attention to detail is to be marvelled at and the level of realism is astounding. But this begs the question: why play these games on a PC when you could just go down to your local pub or snooker hall and play them for real? The experience is far more rewarding and challenging than just timing your mouse button presses. *Jimmy White 2* is a marvellous piece of programming, but what's the point? **Nick** VERDICT **70%**





Fluid

Platform: **PlayStation** Publisher: **Sony**
Developer: **Sony** Price: **£29.99**
Release: **October** Players: **One**

As concepts for games go, this is a little off the handle: guide a dolphin around the seabed collecting sound samples. You then have the opportunity to enter a recording studio and mix the samples together to make 'songs'. In reality, the dolphin is really there for aesthetic reasons – its presence adds nothing to the gameplay as such, it just acts as a vehicle for you to collect sounds.

The mixing studio is where the main part of the game lies, but it seems to have missed the point somewhat. You are only able to mix the sounds; you cannot sequence them to make a song. For this reason alone the game is let down badly.

Fluid is great fun for a while, especially if you have an interest in DJing or in dance music, but after a while, when you have collected every sample and exhausted every possibility of putting them together, there is little reason to go back to the game. An excellent idea, but *Fluid* just don't go far enough to warrant a high score. **Nick**

VERDICT **55%**

QUANTITY CONTROL

The game you are interested in may not be a major release warranting pages of coverage. However, Total CONTROL will ensure that as many titles as possible are reviewed and rated within Quantity Control each issue.

QUANTITY CONTROL

Cool Hand

Platform: **Game Boy** Publisher: **Take 2 Interactive** Developer: **Tarrantula Studios**
Price: **£24.99** Release: **October** Players: **One**

I know what you're thinking, the very idea of playing cards on a Game Boy seems ridiculous. Not only could you buy enough decks of cards to last you a lifetime for a price comparable to that of the cartridge, but for obvious reasons, multiplayer games have never fared too well on our favourite handheld. *Cool Hand* offers three different styles of play; Solitaire, Black Jack, and Cribbage. On the whole, all three games are well presented and surprisingly easy to play considering the limited number of buttons at your disposal. My only real complaint is that due to the number of cards on the screen at once when playing Solitaire, the screen needs to be scrolled around to see what's going on, unavoidable and unfortunately irritating. Fortunately, Black Jack and Cribbage are not similarly afflicted and are both very playable versions of their tabletop counterparts. If you're a fan of card games and spend a lot of time on planes where playing Solitaire in the aisle is often frowned upon this might be worth a look. Cool Hand will also be Game Boy Color compatible when it's released but at the time of writing we were unable to put it to the test. **Justin**

VERDICT **63%**

Vangers

Platform: **PC** Publisher: **Interactive Magic** Developer: **K-D Lab**
Price: **£34.99** Release: **Out Now** Players: **1-8**

Compared to the current mainstream of European and American games for the PC platform, *Vangers* comes as a welcome breath of fresh air. *Vangers* is the first game to be published in the west from Russian developers K-D Lab, and judging by the originality and energy of this production it certainly won't be the last.

Vangers is a top-down viewpoint driving and combat game, vaguely reminiscent of *Micro Machines V3*, but including elements of trading and exploration, racing and diplomacy, all combining to produce a very original game concept. It really doesn't fit into any one genre at all.

The graphics are bright and colourful with a distinctly surrealist tendency. This is reflected in the names, music and language used in the game, although how much of this is down to questionable translation is anyone's guess. The standard of animation is high and the cars handle well once you get used to them. The terrain maps are huge, with persistent deformability.

This is an unusual game, which may not appeal to everyone, but it will certainly repay a little patience with many hours of absorbing gameplay. **Cliff**

VERDICT **67%**

Madden NFL '99

Platform: **PlayStation** Publisher: **Electronic Arts** Developer: **EA Sports**
Price: **£39.99** Release: **Out Now** Players: **1-8**

The *Madden* series of American Football games is continued with this new but predictably similar title. While *Madden NFL '99* was never about to break the moulds set by any of the previous titles, what it sets out to do is achieved very well. The problem with launching a game such as this over here is the obvious lack of interest in the sport. Sadly this is a fault that echoes throughout the game, because its over-complicated nature leads to an initially confusing and frustrating first couple of hours.

The game itself is split into momentary phases of action and tactical play. Before each attempt to gain ground, you must select the appropriate strategy and position your players around the field. It leads to a game that can at times be very slow. Those who persist will find plenty of scope for advanced strategies, something that will take time to master.

Other than the obvious graphical enhancements, *Madden NFL '99* offers little over the previous games, and should only be considered by serious fans of the sport. **Will**

VERDICT **77%**

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FEATURES

IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS

Our features will cover every aspect of the ever-evolving games industry. From next generation machines to major software advancements, no stone will be left unturned as we unveil the latest developments in games technology.

The next generation of games machines is almost upon us and Total CONTROL will be at the forefront of this exciting gaming revolution. Our worldwide network of correspondents will ensure that we are always first with any major hardware or software developments wherever they break.

Dreamcast Concept – A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE ENJOY ENTERTAINMENT
Comes True
Dreamcast: Sega's hope for the next generation.
Will Sega's new dream machine spark the imagination?

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DREAMCAST FEATURE

Dreamcast™

On November 20 1998, we will see the start of the next 'next generation' console war. Sega will launch the Dreamcast onto an excited Japanese public and attempt to resurrect their flagging console credibility. While the Saturn is still seen as a partial success in Japan, the console was not well received outside of its native country. The reasons for this are well documented: despite the Saturn being first out of the blocks in all major territories, it was beaten hands down by the PlayStation. Better marketing and a public perception that Sony's machine was the more powerful of the two led to domination in the 32-bit market for the PlayStation.

Dream on...

To put it in a nutshell, the Dreamcast offers better than high end PC power for the price of a console. How have they managed this? Well, Sega admit that they will be taking a huge loss on the making of the console (the Dreamcast is expected to retail for around £140 in Japan); they expect to make their money on the software. Could this be seen as a desperate measure on Sega's behalf? Well, yes and no. The PlayStation experience has taught companies the importance of having a huge installed user base, and to compete with the current PlayStation user base something radical is needed. And if anyone in Europe fears that they will be overlooked as a minor territory, CEO of Sega Europe, Kazutoshi Miyake, had this to say about Sega's future role in Europe: "Our goal is to deliver unprecedented gaming experiences to European consumers. All prominent publishers/developers are already supporting Dreamcast, guaranteeing from day one the strongest software line-up ever available for a new videogame console."

A modem that will allow gameplay over the Internet and possibly enable users to download extra game data will come as standard in the US and Japan, although this has yet to be confirmed for Europe. The reasons behind this are simple: Japanese and American Internet users have enjoyed free local calls for sometime now, something that BT are reluctant to do despite considerable pressure. There is also cost to take into account; supplying a modem as standard would add another £30 or so to the price of a Dreamcast, and it seems that Sega are keen on a sub £200 price point. This is something that would be more realistic if there was no extra cost of a modem. However, they are still undecided on the future of such a peripheral, so let's hope they opt to include a modem. The modem will be 33.6Kbps, fast enough for current online demands, and will be removable. As modems become faster and cheaper you will be able to upgrade.

Rumours abound that PlayStation 2 will be DVD, so why have Sega opted for CD-ROM? The only advantage that DVD holds over CD for games' manufacturers is in the amount of storage space; DVD holds 4.7GB and a CD has 650MB. This sounds like a huge gap, but not when you take into account that most CD games use very little of storage space for game data. Sega have opted to use their own brand of 1GB CDs in a move that will not only give a little extra space for FMV, but will also help to reduce piracy; no one but Sega and its licensees will have access to these CDs.

CHAIRMAN
SEGA ENTERPRISES, LTD

The pace of change in societal trends around the world has increased dramatically. Significant advances in network communications, and satellite technologies in recent years have changed our social infrastructure, speeding up the way we all interact. As part of this change, people's desires have shifted and people today want things that are both artistically creative and functional.

The new generation video game machine that we unveil today is truly a "dream machine", incorporating the most advanced technologies from the world's leading companies in their respective fields of information Technology. With your support, I am confident that Dreamcast will become a de facto standard for the future of all digital entertainment.

I encourage everyone from artists to developers and distributors to participate in the Dreamcast project. Together with you, I would like to boldly bring Dreamcast into the 21st century. Your support is deeply appreciated.

INTERVIEWS

There is no better way of getting to the heart of an issue than talking to the major players involved. Every feature we produce will incorporate the inside opinions of the people concerned. Our interviewers will talk to all the relevant developers and programmers, asking the questions hardcore gamesplayers want answered.

IN THE LAUNCH ISSUE

The full, in-depth Dreamcast feature will appear in the launch issue of Total CONTROL, on sale 23 October 1998, priced just £1.50.

Out of CONTROL

Total CONTROL, where does it come from? Who are the hardcore gamesplayers behind it? And more importantly, what makes them tick? All is revealed...

Name: **CLIFF SMITH**
Position: Senior Staff Writer
Previous experience:
Staff Writer – Ultimate PC

Favourite game ever I've been playing *Civilization* on the Amiga for nearly five years, and I still come back for more. It is the most perfectly designed game ever, far better than even its own sequel. It is witty, intelligent, and even slightly educational. A couple of hours spent playing *Civilization* never feels like time wasted.

Game of the moment All the great PC games that I'm reviewing for the first issue of Total CONTROL, of course! We seem to have a whole squadron of combat flight simulators in at the moment, and I've spent most of today checking out DID's excellent *Total Air War*. As for why, wait and see.

Next month Justin and I are booked up for a journalists vs. readers *Quake II* match next month, using *Ground Zero*, the new mission pack from Activision. The winner gets to play a guy who goes by the unlikely name of 'Thrush', who is supposed to be the US *Quake II* champion fragger. May the best marine win, and don't worry: I'll be gentle with you...

We'll be reviewing that add-on pack in the first issue, as well as the eagerly anticipated *SiN*, which I reckon is the better game. I've played the downloadable demo, and I can hardly wait for the review copy to arrive.

Name: **WILL ADKIN**
Position: Staff Writer
Previous experience:
Staff Writer – PC Force

Favourite game ever It may be ancient, but *Another World* on the Amiga was spectacular when it was released. Ignoring the graphics and sound, *Another World* had one of the best stories ever, a perfect learning curve, and thousands of great touches that kept me playing many times after I first finished it.

Game of the moment The scariest game ever, *Resident Evil 2* is still keeping me up all night. It's slightly flawed by the annoying loading times, but it is still a great game full of fiendish puzzles and plenty of gore. Killing zombies has never been so much fun.

Next month It's about time the N64 had a game that looked capable of rivalling *Goldeneye*, and at last it's here. *Turok 2: Seeds of Evil* is the game that I'll be looking out for next month. It will have some competition in the office multiplayer sessions, however, because *SiN* on the PC could also raise a few eyebrows. Which one will turn out best is something we are all going to have fun finding out. *Abe's Exoddus* should be every bit as good as the first game, which will make it well worth looking out for, and the mix of *Resident Evil 2* and *Final Fantasy VII* in *Parasite Eve* doesn't sound like a bad combination at all.

Name: **NICK JONES**
Position: Deputy Editor
Previous experience:
Staff Writer – PlayStation Solutions
Editor – Total 64

Favourite game ever Just for sheer amount of hours spent playing it over one Christmas, *Super Mario World* on the SNES. No platform game has come close to the charm, longevity and playability of Miyamoto's classic.

Game of the moment *Rainbow Six* on the PC. Quite simply the closest thing that the PC has to *Goldeneye*, albeit with more realism and strategy. Also, as a new convert to the wonders of 3D acceleration, I still can't believe how good this looks with 3DFX. Stunning. If only we could get the network game working...

Next month Can't wait to see *Turok 2* running in the N64's hi-res mode – the game looked fantastic at this summer's E3 show in Atlanta and will probably turn out to be one of the all time classics on the N64. Also, a trip up to Scottish developers, DMA, should be a real eye opener after playing the wonderfully wacky and extremely challenging *Silicon Valley* this month. A few surprises are promised, so this should be one of the highlights of the month. Oh yes, and the small matter of the Japanese release of *Metal Gear Solid*, potentially the best PlayStation game ever. No doubt this game will be responsible for many a late night in the coming month...

Name: **JUSTIN CALVERT**
Position: Editor
Previous experience:
Editor – PlayStation Solutions
Editor – Total 64 Editor – PC Force

Favourite game ever *Sensible World of Soccer* on the Amiga, purely because of the number of hours I spent on it making Exeter City the most feared domestic side in Europe. If my Amiga hadn't packed up a few years ago, I honestly believe I'd still be playing it now.

Game of the moment Definitely *Tekken 3* on the PlayStation. The original *Tekken* was the reason I bought a PlayStation in the first place, *Tekken 2* was the perfect sequel – and now they've improved upon it. No other PlayStation beat-'em-up is even worth looking at right now.

Next month I can't wait to get my hands on *Abe's Exoddus*, because my enjoyment of the original *Abe's Oddysee* was lessened by the fact that I was writing a solution to it at the time. Also *Force Commander* – the very idea of a real-time strategy based on the Star Wars universe is exciting enough that I'm thinking of booking a week off to play it as soon as it comes in for review.

Mainly though, seeing the launch issue of Total CONTROL hit the shelves and then fly off them. After all the hard work we've put in over the past couple of months it'll be great to finally see it all come together.

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